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The purpose of this study is to describe, implement, and interpret the intersection of service-learning, Jewish values and ways of knowing, adult education, and lifelong learning for people over the age of 50. By expanding service-learning to include both older adults and Jewish ways of knowing, there is potential for transforming these frameworks and models. Contrasting and comparing the experience of traditional American adult education with the experience of Jewish social-justice and social-action oriented ways of knowing, this study focuses on the third stage of life – transition to retirement - as a time of possible new learning, new self-identity, and new self-satisfaction through community engagement.

Using the qualitative applied methodology of action-research, a new model was created and implemented in a Jewish non-profit, faith-based, social service agency as a means of discovering how older adults might benefit from service-learning modalities and how service-learning might be benefited by including older adults as well as Jewish ways of knowing. Data were obtained through observations at academic and social discussions, through collection of journals, e-mails, and other correspondences of participants and their agencies, and through evaluative processes.

This study challenges the focus of service-learning on younger participants in need of academic development, skills development, character development, citizenry development, and vocational development. Older people generally have already

developed these skills. They seek to simultaneously experience self-learning while giving back to the community.

Themes that ran through this study were personal pleasure and satisfaction, compassion, relationships and community, and multiple viewpoints and interpretations in service, in reflection, and in learning. The results raise the issue of including older participants, as well as Jewish values and ways of knowing, into service-learning theory and practice. Based on the findings, the impact on theory and practice in secular and religious education, and especially in service-learning, is discussed.

*Keywords:* Service-learning, adult education, lifelong-learning, Jewish epistemology, Jewish education, Jewish service-learning, baby boomers, older adults, mature adults, Judaism, retirees, compassion, community, pleasure, relationships, non-profit organizations, social service agencies, volunteerism and service, aging.

JEWISHLY-INFORMED MATURE ADULT SERVICE-LEARNING

by

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To all those who love to learn, love to provide service, and love to critically reflect on these activities. If this does not describe you, consider joining us. We are having an incredibly pleasurable and meaningful time doing so.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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**PREFACE**

**THE JOURNEY TO JEWISHLY-INFORMED  
MATURE ADULT SERVICE-LEARNING**

During a period when the cost of living was very high, Rabbi Mendel noticed that the many needy people whom he entertained as guests in his house received smaller loaves than usual. He gave orders to make the loaves larger than before, since loaves were intended to adjust to hunger and not to the price. (Buber, 1948/1969, p. 128)

**About volunteers and service**

There are great needs in our communities and volunteers are often there to fill those needs. Indeed, many communities would not be able to function without volunteers. Most people would define a volunteer as someone who provides a service without being paid. The Oxford English Dictionary (2012) defines a volunteer as 1) a person who freely offers to take part in a task, and 2) a person who works for an organization without being paid (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/volunteer>). However, even though the *work* is unpaid, there is great value to such service that is frequently unnoticed, unacknowledged or unmeasured.

Most people think of a volunteer as someone who receives nothing in return for service except implicit rewards of the heart. However, a new type of volunteer model has emerged which has changed the idea from volunteer as selfless vessel to volunteer as an overflowing and replenishable vessel – the service-learner. The service-learning model is usually part of a college or high school course in which the service performed by the

student integrates and enhances the academic curriculum. The service is usually performed within an educational institution in partnership with a local non-profit organization, generally one with a social justice mission. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (2012) explains that the service-learning model of community service and civic engagement on American campuses began in the 19th century and was revitalized in the 1960s and again in the 2000s. Generally, service-learners are college students in their late teens and early twenties who are setting out to change and conquer the world. These experiences can be energizing, as well as sobering. They inform the student about the world and about their possible place in the world. According to Vogelgesang and Austin (2000), service-learning “has been found to have more positive benefits for students than does participating in typical volunteer community service” (p. 2).

As a volunteer coordinator for a Jewish non-profit and community social service agency for the past six years, I work with over 800 volunteers a year. These volunteers hail from different age groups, socio-economic strata, educational training, cultural and racial backgrounds, religious ideologies, life experiences, vocations and skill levels. I personally and professionally know the impact that service has on the community and on the individual, and began to contemplate the possible similarities and differences between a person who is a *regular* volunteer and one who is a service-learner. I came to think about the possible changes and growth that might occur when an older or more experienced volunteer shifts from a volunteer model to a service-learning model - intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. I started to wonder if there is as much increased compassion, deepened learning, and greater self-fulfillment with older

service-learners as there is with younger ones. I also came to see a connection between service-learning and the Jewish values, beliefs, and ways of knowing that are focused on social-justice.

Many of the Jewish volunteers with whom I work have been inculcated at an early age to volunteer and embrace a social justice propensity – it is embedded in the Jewish communal psyche - but these volunteers had not deconstructed or integrated the reasons for this inclination. These volunteers stated that they want to learn more about Judaism, to fill in what is missing in their Jewish education and understanding, but they were stuck at an understanding and interpretation level similar to childhood. They have never studied ancient or even modern Jewish texts or heard about the teachings of famous Jewish philosophers. They have never studied how their Jewish ways of knowing brought them to volunteering in the first place and to their social action perspectives.

This project started from many conversations with older volunteers, similar to the comments of George (not his real name):

Since I retired, I don't know what to do. I feel like I lost my way. I want to remain active. I think I should. No, I know I should do some volunteer service, but I want to do it on my own terms. I want it to be useful to the community, giving back, I guess you could call it, but it needs to be meaningful and not just office work. I want to keep growing and learning. I am looking for a way.

The more I thought about it, the more I thought I might have a new way of combining the service, learning, reflection, and meaning for older adults, with social action oriented perspectives gleaned from Judaism. I wanted to see if combining these would meet the needs of older volunteers as well as the community. Since our

organization is not a “traditional” institution of higher education, such as a university, I thought about how we might engage these older volunteers in learning and critical reflection.

In my research I discovered that there are very few service-learning opportunities for older adults. After all, “adults tend to be the recipients of, rather than the participants in, service learning” (Smith, 2008, p. 27). The goal of this dissertation project is to explore the idea of service-learning as promoting adult development, within a Jewish context, specifically for those retirees who are in the *third stage* of their lives. The reasons I am interested in this topic are numerous; my background and worldview may help you understand why.

### **Background of the researcher**

Peshkin (1988) writes that researchers need to acknowledge their own subjectivity (such as their prejudices and impartialities) while they are actively involved in the research process (not just at the end of the research journey). He feels that although subjectivity is inevitable, awareness of this phenomenon may help researchers understand how it shapes their inquiry and their research outcomes. I know that since I strongly believe in improving the world, as is the Jewish tradition, I am troubled by people who are apathetic, uncaring, disrespectful, uncivil, intolerant, or unkind. Since I feel very strongly in the emancipatory possibilities of learning and education (Greene, 1981; Freire, 2001), I am very concerned about the present state of educational our institutions, structures, and curriculum, as well as concerned about future generations. Although I am optimistic in my personal outlook and hopes regarding the future, I am realistic and

sometimes quite pessimistic in observing the disconnect between people and the effect on society.

As a white, middle-aged, American-born, married with children, able-bodied, heterosexual Jewish woman who has traveled the world, I am a passionate and avid advocate for service as well as for the process of questioning. I believe that questioning is one of the fundamental Jewish ways of knowing, and I want to explore this as part of my research on service-learning, social justice, and critical action (Fisher, 2012, p. 3). Questioning and wrestling with multiple viewpoints can be seen as a post-modern hermeneutic (interpretations that show many different meanings – none of which can claim to be the ultimate truth) which is in contrast to the search for certainty. With Judaism, this form of multiple ways of knowing has been in existence for thousands of years.

### **Setting a vision**

It was a confluence of factors that created the idea for a *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning* model. At the center of this vision is the idea of a compassionate community, sparked by a moral and ethical imperative of being a co-creator in improving the world and connecting and sustaining people to each other, to nature, and to something greater than themselves. This vision is not limited to Jewish people, to adults, to Americans, to any group or geographic region. It is a vision for the present and the future that counters the present negative, divisive, non-communicative, destructive, uncaring, suffering, disillusioned, and hopeless circumstances and feelings that so many people on this planet experience daily. I do not believe that it has to be this way. I agree with Soo

Hoo (2004) that we change the world by doing nothing. It is time to change the world by doing something.

The reason I chose “mature” (older) adults is that I have access to this population for the study through my work. In addition, there is increasing research on the needs of the Baby Boomer generation for meaningful service, learning, and connection. Baby boomers, Jewish and non-Jewish, want to continue to learn, to continue contributing as active and productive members of society, to continue to discover meaning in their lives, to continue to sharpen and deepen their cognitive and critical reflective skills, and to continue to be civically engaged and role models for future generations. I am part of this Baby Boomer demographic so in a way I am also studying myself. In order to accomplish this, I will be utilizing a type of research model called *action research* which will be explained further in the methodology section.

And finally, following the lead of Riane Eisler, author of *The Real Wealth of Nations*, I can envision the possibility of a more “caring economy,” an economy that is not fueled by money but is driven by compassion, collaboration, and care for others. Imagine the current economic status of America if financial markets were not powered by greed but by community caring. I believe that education might be the vehicle for introducing and incorporating this caring economy. As a Jewish Mother, I care not only about every Jew but about every man, woman and child on this earth. As a Jew I care not only about freedom for the Jewish people but freedom for every person around the corner and around the world. I care about community. I care about relationships. I care about

and feel compelled to seek out ways to increase compassionate thinking and action in myself and others.

I want lifelong service-learning to be a vehicle for this compassionate presence as viewed through our socialization processes and communities, through gender and sexual orientation, through religious and secular foundations and viewpoints, through philosophical and intellectual frameworks, through meta-framework (point/ counterpoint) and critical questioning. It is a new vision of a caring economy and education, framed through a lifelong service-learning model. My hope is that compassion and justice will increase their impact on society, and that I might have a small part in repairing the world. The moral necessity of a more compassionate and empathetic society cannot be understated. I believe it is the foundation of our world – without which all institutions and society itself crumble. I freely offer to take part in this enterprise and undertake this enormous task. After reading about this project, I hope you will agree with and consider incorporating some of the *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning* paradigm into your life.

I attempted to write most of this project in non-academic language so that the older people I studied and with whom I learned, along with their families, friends, neighbors, caregivers, professionals, community agency personnel, and policymakers, could read, understand, and find value in their lives from this research. I want to thank the people in my life for sharing their divergent viewpoints and quests for knowledge, for demonstrating their humor and joy in difficult circumstances, and for their steadfast compassionate hope and love. I share this journey with you.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Rabbi Yitzhak Eisik said: The motto of life is 'Give and take.' Everyone must be both a giver and a receiver. He who was not both is as a barren tree. (Buber, 1948/1969, p. 220)

#### **Background of the Study**

The purpose of this dissertation is to add concepts, designs, and research into service-learning models, focusing on a population that is not normally included in service-learning prototypes - mature adults over the age of fifty - and epistemology (ways of knowing) that are also not normally included in service-learning theory and practice - Jewish action-oriented values, beliefs, and ways of knowing.

The service-learning movement has evolved over the last 100 years, and continues to evolve. Service-learning is defined differently by different groups. According to Eyler and Giles (1999) "a lot of energy has been devoted to defining service learning," and by 1990 there were over forty-seven definitions of "service-learning" (p. 3). Lisman (1998) maintains that:

service learning, or academically based community service, is a form of learning in which students engage in community service as part of academic coursework. The service experiences are connected with the learning outcomes of the course, and there is an opportunity for teacher-guided reflection of the service experience. Typically this teacher-guided reflection occurs with the instructor asking students to keep journals of their service experience. (p. 23)

Much research on service-learning shows that high quality programs demonstrate outcomes in which students show increased civic mindedness and enhanced participation within communities, are more accepting of diverse populations, think more critically and globally, foster integrated learning, and perform better academically (Furco & Root, 2010). Given this information, it seems that service-learning would be utilized more often and more consistently as a mainstream educational technique, for all populations.

This *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning* project (JIMASL), hereafter referred to as the *Project*, explores ways to involve older people as not just recipients of service-learning designs, but also as active participants in service-learning communities. It explores the components needed to create a culture in which this model might exist as part of a bigger and expanded continuum of lifelong service-learning. It imagines a lifelong service-learning continuum as one of the normative educational vehicles helping to (re)conceptualize how a society of such lifelong service-learners might appear and function differently from today's society.

It is also my intention for this to be read by not just academics but by people in many different communities who might be able to incorporate the ideas and actions into daily practice. I would like the older people whom I am studying and their contemporaries, as well as those who work, live, and play with them, to be able to read, understand this project, and implement these concepts into their lives. There are explanations of various terms in this text as well as a glossary for quick reference.

## **Social and Cultural Issues**

The main issue addressed by this study is devaluation. Perceived value or lack of perceived value of people, places, and things are social and cultural constructs. I am concerned about all people and their intrinsic (natural /innate) as well as extrinsic (external) value to the community. I am particularly troubled by the lack of value attributed to mature or older adults, particularly retirees or those forced into early retirement or unemployment. Cultural and social norms in our society create devaluation of certain groups and concepts for many reasons, and these include:

- the devaluation of mature age (previously referred to as old age) - because of societal emphasis on youth;
- the devaluation of the experience that leads to wisdom - because of emphasis placed on facts but not the analyses and syntheses of these facts;
- devaluation of education for mature adults - because of emphasis on acquisition of *useful* education, such as for job skills;
- devaluation of personal meaning - because of emphasis placed on mass consumption, peer pressure, and external or impersonal meaning;
- devaluation of community connections - because of emphasis placed on individual autonomy and ambition;
- devaluation of critical thinking, reflection, and action - because of emphasis placed on accepting present hegemonic (authority or influence wielded by a dominant group) hierarchies; and



- devaluation of religious, spiritual and moral principles - because of emphasis on principals of science and rationality.

This means that we hold individual values that appear to be in stark contrast with our collective communal values and responsibilities.

Within this contrast we hold a duality (two-part characteristic) regarding maturity. On the one hand, we are taught to respect our elders and the wisdom they have attained throughout their lives. For instance it is written in the Bible that "you should rise before the elderly and honor the aged" (Leviticus 19:32). Even the Hebrew word for *elderly* is *zaken* which is an acronym for *zeh shekaneh lakhma* - a person who has acquired wisdom. On the other hand, our society is obsessed with youth, as shown in our media and in our corporations. Grey hairs are dyed, faces are surgically lifted, true age is secretly guarded, with birthdays reminding us that we are *over the hill*, and occasional lapses in memory or judgment explained away as *senior moments* to be feared and avoided. "Old" is synonymous with decrepit, falling apart, and useless. The viewpoints of retirement as a time for pushing senior citizens aside and on to the rocking chair on the porch, and, pushing mature individuals from their jobs to make way for *new blood and new ideas* are erroneous. The term *active senior* is seen as oxymoronic; however, *active* and *senior* are not mutually exclusive. Even from a religious perspective, in which the *divine spark* resides within every individual, such devaluation of an *elder* as *inactive* is immoral because of the way it pigeon-holes and stereotypes an entire population. Individuals in that (growing older) populace should not be obstructed from reaching their earthly and sacred potentials. And from a secular humanistic viewpoint, such a

devaluation that creates a waste of human potential is also equally immoral. In other words, the problem of ageism is not just a corporeal (physical) problem (i.e., people are *spaced* or placed in nursing homes); it is a reasoning and moral problem as well (also creating spaces and places for older people to be away from our thoughts and conscious levels). In the myriad ways in which *old* and *ignorable* are linked and applied to older or mature people, there is mounting evidence to the contrary.

Sadler (2006) reports that retirement is a relatively new institution. People who lived in previous generations could not afford to retire or did not live long enough to do so. When retirement was institutionalized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was seen as a fitting finish to labor when the average life expectancy was about 65. However, this concept of retirement is neither in keeping with the nature of work in the information age or the extension of human longevity. Thus the term “Third Age” marks this period (p. 15).

The moral imperative of valuing maturity is seen in the research that continues to emerge from the study of these people who are entering this *Third Age* or *third stage* of life, and how older persons should be viewed as human beings who still have much to offer the society. In particular, research demonstrates that people of the Baby Boomer generation, born between 1946 and 1964, are seeking to remain active while simultaneously providing meaningful service to the community (*giving back*) and attaining personal self-fulfillment. In 2004, researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, along with the Met Life Foundation Initiative on Retirement and Civic Engagement, found that for older adults, it is the quality of social connectedness that is important, and:

where the real promise of improving the quality of community life lies, played out through a variety of mechanisms, formal and informal, structured and unstructured, organized and unorganized. (p. 15)

Another issue that this study strives to address is the devaluation of civic engagement. Tied into the aforementioned issues, there is a devaluation of compassion for others, especially a lack of compassion for elders, which has led to rampant elder abuse. And the final devaluation to be addressed is that of Jewish action-oriented social justice epistemologies. Jewish epistemologies - ways of knowing and providing meaning - are often disregarded, disparaged, or denigrated, especially in education, in service, and in service-learning models. All of these devaluations affect our moral compasses and practices - the ramifications of which will be addressed further.

This study also addresses the issue of community needs. The needs of the community are great. With budget cuts to governmental as well as social service and community agencies, the needs for people to learn about and to serve their communities with civic pride, compassion, and wisdom is becoming even greater (Perry, 2010). Research in service-learning demonstrates that this type of experiential education might be able to fulfill these needs and to create new types of communities based on both shared and divergent values. I believe that Jewishly-informed ways of knowing have much to offer the world in terms of the educational and experiential that also unite service-learning. And I believe that older people still have much to offer society.

And finally I believe that utilizing a trans-disciplinary and “trans-epistemic” approach to service and to learning benefit both the service and the learning and its value to society as well. *Trans-epistemic*, a term coined by Cruz, goes beyond the idea of

transforming disciplines to the idea of transformation through and across different epistemologies. This is important because valuing the ranges of experiences, service, learnings, and actions of mature or older adults dovetail with valuing the range of action-oriented and socially-just Jewish epistemologies. It is my intent to show how the inter-related and inter-connected nature of the above mentioned values and beliefs might be of benefit to education and to society. The significance and rationale of the study is revealed this in the next section.

### **Significance and Rationale of the Study**

The rationale for this type of mature adult service-learning model is based on these concepts of connectedness. Service-learning not only connects people with knowledge and information to learn in a real-life environment, but also connects people with other people, other agencies, other thought patterns, other engagement patterns, other skills, and other ways of being in the community. People often complain of not feeling connected to the community in much the same way that students feel unconnected from their education and from their communities. The relationships and connections between education and learning, self (worth and esteem), community, and their mutual and reciprocal concern have disintegrated. Lack of self-esteem, lack of community awareness, lack of empathy and concern for others, lack of perceived resources, lack of cooperation and interest, lack of civility, and lack of critical thinking skills are the weapons that damage the foundations of society and the people who live in that society.

These are issues that affect education, schooling, and learning - terms that are often used interchangeably but which are not interchangeable. A quick definition is that

education is the process of acquiring general knowledge via the theory and practice of teaching, that schooling is the institution in which education or instruction is given, and that learning is the attainment of knowledge through experience, practice, study, or being taught. I believe that learning is an active process, and that, unfortunately, schooling has become a passive process for most students. This causes me to question the arrangement of our present educational paradigms.

### **Service-Learning and New Learner Populations**

As an educational and service-oriented instrument, service-learning might be the perfect vehicle for an aging demographic. Yet, service-learning has been utilized and researched almost exclusively with youth. Zaff and Lerner (2010) claim that involvement in service-learning promotes positive youth development, therefore might involvement in service-learning also promote positive *mature* adult (older adult, senior, or Baby Boomer) development? The idea of expanding service-learning to new *learner* populations is both thought-provoking and inspiring. New service-learning populations might include mature adults who are losing their jobs during this economic downturn as well as retirees. These *mature* adults who are unemployed and who engage in service-learning activities might be able to help many community agencies and at the same time gain necessary occupation skills. They might also improve their critical thinking and critical action skills, meet new people and contacts, and cultivate compassion towards diverse groups. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2009), older adults are returning to education in higher numbers; from 2006 to 2017 NCES projects a rise of 10 percent in enrollments of people

under 25 and a rise of 19 percent in enrollments of people 25 and over. Many of these *older* college students return to school after hiatuses that stemmed from factors as diverse as family dynamics, health problems, employment issues, financial concerns or even the perceived lack of connection to real life knowledge.

This is precisely why the *service-learning* educational model was created. It was designed to combat the disconnection between the educational disciplines taught, the education-life connections of the student, and the student's moral obligations of being part of a community. Purpel (1989) viewed education as "at root a moral endeavor and that its present crisis is best seen as such in order to reflect not only on the educational process but on the larger culture as well" (p. 65). Service-learning was created in part to reclaim the moral endeavor of education, and, as such, should be open to people of all ages. Since service-learning has mostly been the venue of early college experience, a majority of educational journal articles and research about service-learning are directed towards the experiences of this age group with this type of learning. I see this as a problem, since it limits the number of people who might benefit and learn from this approach. One issue I sought to study relates to the lack of access to service-learning for populations that are other than, and older than, traditional service-learning (college) students. Although there has been a push for service-learning opportunities geared for elementary and high school settings, there has not been a service-learning model for educating older adults, those who generally have neither the time nor the resources to pursue advanced educational degrees. Could there be a way for such adults, those beyond age 50, to learn by experiencing deep reflection and critical inquiry paired with authentic

community service? If students are dropping out of schools because of lack of perceived connectedness to their worlds, is there a parallel experience in which adults experience a similar apathetic, stressed-out, and dropped out syndrome. Could service-learning with adults connect them more to their communities and to their learning potentials?

There is a great need for conceptualization, research, and evaluation for new service-learning plans. Bolsin (2010) speaks of lifelong learning (p. 27), but what about lifelong service-learning models? What about lifelong service-learning models that are geared specifically for mature adults who are unemployed or retired, that are housed and implemented in non-tradition educational settings such as non-profit agencies, and that increase sense of purpose, develop critical inquiry skills, augment vocational and service options, and help the community? There is evidence that many retirees feel useless and unwanted. What could service-learning bring to their lives? Macfarlane (2007) acknowledges that universities are “now re-engaging with wider society” and that it “affords almost infinite opportunities for universities to establish the links with external interest” (p.27). Yet, his question is “on what terms are these new links to be established?” (p. xi). New links could include mature adults utilizing these service-learning opportunities during their golden years, perhaps in a variety of new community-institutional partnerships. Mature adults might also profit from additional exposure to other vocational experiences and skills via service-learning (K. Johnson, Elliott, Adams, & Stein, 2010), especially for those who are unemployed. Unfortunately, most working adults and retirees have no access to service-learning opportunities since they are not in *traditional* educational settings, such as universities.

Another issue confronting the service-learning movement is that the practice and research on service-learning is fragmented and/ or applied to only specific populations or disciplines. Service-learning research needs to occur in other venues and with other partners. The problem of fragmentation leads one to question if service-learning can work within and between populations and wide age ranges of participants. Another issue I sought to study relates to expanding and researching intergenerational learning opportunities. Could it be that service-learning, since it is geared toward younger populations, does not address or meet older adults' needs, schedules, or maturity? This is not only an issue in the greater community but, from my own professional experience, in Jewish circles as well. Many times, older people are perceived as only being on the receiving end of service-learning practice. The explosion of practical Jewish service-learning opportunities, for teens only, has left out not only adult service-learners, but also theoretical and scholarly research and exploration for other age groups.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study then is to construct a model for incorporating the Jewish values, perspectives, and ways of knowing /doing to enhance cooperative, experiential, connected, and critical reflective learning among mature adults who volunteer in a social service agency, based on the theoretical foundation and practical formation of an adult Jewish service-learning model. In addition, since there have been limited use of Jewish perspectives, and Jewish ways of knowing, in service-learning models, I wonder how implementation of these Jewish ways of knowing and reflection into service-learning



activities with mature adults (seniors) might impact their sense of service, critical depth of learning and degree of wider community connection.

I believe that because of these connections there might be more participation and caring for our communities and for each other, increased and better employment options, more acceptance of others and more social justice, more intentional and varied thought processes, and more considered and considerate ethical action.

### **Audience and Participants**

Initially, the focus of this study would be Jewish adults transitioning into the *third chapters* of their lives due to possible reduction of employment or full retirement. Many Jewish adults are also interested in learning more about their Judaism, beyond the simple stories they learned as children in Sunday school. This study might eventually be expanded to include a larger population, such as educators, social workers, civil servants, businesses, interfaith and other communities. In light of the recent devastating financial meltdowns caused by greed and selfishness, as well as the grassroots revolutions unfolding all over the globe due to lack of freedom, hope, and compassion, the benefits to society from this Jewish service-learning framework might be enormous. Fundamentally, there might be a shift in thinking and action in education towards a lifelong service-learning model informed by what I believe is Judaism's tradition of open-mindedness, questioning and struggle, freedom and liberation, caring and community, and humor and hope, resulting in a societal shift toward a more compassionate world.

## **Definition of Terms**

For this study, I will review some of the literature related to American and Jewish epistemology (ways of knowing), adult education, lifelong-learning, and service-learning.

### **Adult Education**

Adult Education is defined as education for adults after they are no longer in educational settings such as school or university, and encompasses the following indicators:

A broad description of the process by which individuals continue learning after formal schooling; and institutional or organizational coordinated activities to accomplish specific educational objectives. (Witte & Witte, 2006, p. 30)

Adults approach learning with different motivations and divergent learning needs and styles. Malcolm Knowles (1973/1990, 1977, 1984, 1989), also known as the father of modern adult education, stylized the field of *andragogy*, which he defined as the art and science of helping adults learn, as opposed to pedagogy, which “is more teacher-directed learning and is considered the art and science of teaching children” (Witte & Witte, 2006, p. 30). Knowles was highly interested in self-directed learning. He felt that there was a deep psychological need for being responsible for one’s own life (Knowles, 1984). He admitted that self-directed learning is best utilized when insight, planning, creativity, problem solving, judgment, and self-confidence were required.

For centuries, learning through story-telling was a universal way to connect people to their worlds. In Judaism, oral law and tradition are as important as the written rules. Education and learning was not just for children but also for adults. Stories allow a

safe space for exploration of other narratives, both of self and of society (Greene, 1981). Stories can also challenge stereotypes (Cowhey, 2006, p. 30). Many adult learners have personal stories that no longer serve them; and adult education can be a vehicle for self-exploration. In the modern, fragmented, adult education movement, theorists and practitioners are pushing for a more holistic and pluralistic creation of knowledge and perspective.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong learning is the process by which a lifetime of experiences, including cognitive, mental, and intellectual pursuits as well as emotional, physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and other journeys, creates the learning that enhances and synthesizes present and future experiences. The American Council on Education defines lifelong learning as:

the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments. (Longworth & Davies, p. 22)

The lifelong learning movement, a concept formed in the 1970s, focuses on adult education. Elementary and secondary education were not included in its original vision, although there were proponents of applying this continuum model to all ages. Kodesh (1997) notes that lifelong education is one of the oldest values of Jewish heritage and that “hundreds of years ago our sages pointed out the significance of constant enrichment of knowledge regardless of the practical benefit the student acquired from it” (p. 553).

There are many ongoing issues in the lifelong-learning movement. One is the schism between educators and policy makers who do not agree on the definition of terminology and intent. For instance, the term, *lifelong learning* is seen as more casual than the explicitly intentional term, *lifelong education*. Some view the movement as needing to focus on development of (work) skills, while others see it as a vehicle for personal development and humanistic and democratic ideals. Some feel the movement should begin in our formative years; most feel that it should encompass only later stages of life. Why can it not encompass all of these?

Another issue with lifelong-learning, especially for less educated persons who might be people of color or lower economic status, is accessibility and input into what is *taught* at educational institutions. In a post-modern society, there is a dispute about what classifies as knowledge-production. People still cling to certainty and binary oppositions (Kang, 2007), despite the acknowledgement of diversity. Finally, “lifelong-learning (and the creation of autonomous, self-directed individuals) implies a risk to learners and to social cohesion” (Maehl, 2003, p. 1482), since educated persons can challenge common social and cultural norms.

### **Service-Learning**

Service-Learning is defined as the learning that takes place in combining academic goals and community service with reflective thoughts and practices. The Community Service Act of 1990, which authorized the Learn and Serve America grant program, defines service-learning as:

a method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; and helps foster civic responsibility; and that is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience. (<http://www.learnandserve.gov/>)

There is some question as to how to even write the phrase that combines service and learning into a unique concept. According to Thomsen (2006), *Service-LEARNING* focuses on the learning primarily and service secondarily, *SERVICE-learning* is the opposite. *Service learning* (without the hyphen) suggests that the service and learning goals are separate and *SERVICE-LEARNING* focuses equally on service and learning, with each enhancing the other (p. 7). For this project, I take the last option and indicate it with the phrase in lower case lettering as *service-learning*. I do this not because I think them unimportant but precisely because I find them important to the process in which there is a suggestion of humility within both the service and learning. As Purpel (1989) warns us “education involves inquiry, and inquiry requires care, caution, and humility in the face of the enormity of the task” (p. 52). I choose to link the service and learning with a hyphen and to focus on them equally enhancing the other. Therefore, throughout this document, it will be written as *service-learning* except when phrased or written differently by quoted authors.

Most service-learning programs are partnered with *traditional* academic and educational institutions. These programs are popular and well-funded in colleges. As

mentioned above, most of the service-learning programs, articles, and research are based on the college populations. Strom (2009) explains that:

It was in the mid-1980s that service-learning took off, with the establishment of organizations like Campus Compact and Youth Service America, whose mission is to spur national service efforts among youth. Today, most colleges and universities incorporate service-learning in their curriculums, and some departments require at least one course; in 2008, Tulane University made a service-learning course part of the required core curriculum. (p.1)

Additional populations need to participate and be researched including mature adults.

Luce (1990) argues that:

service-learning is traditionally viewed as a particular form of experiential education, one that emphasizes for students the accomplishment of tasks which meet human needs in combination with conscious educational growth. (p. i)

Harrison (1987) adds, and I concur, that “service is not just giving out, it is also gaining insights” (p. x) and that there is joy and satisfaction, and pain and frustration, in it as well.

Heffner and Beversluis (2002) explain that:

service learning as a term was first coined in the late 1960s to describe the efforts to link educational goals for students with their active participation in the local community. The term reflects the desire of educators to move students beyond “doing good” toward a richer understanding of themselves, their communities, and academic course content. (p. x-xi)

Robert Sigmon (1994), an early service-learning pioneer, describes the purpose of service-learning as “the linking of service with learning to create a congruent service ethic throughout the campus culture and within the curriculum” (p.1).

Many people consider service-learning to be a branch of experiential education. Service-learning, however, is more than just another form of experiential learning: service-learning participants continually filter their experiences through progressively nuanced prisms of life experiences, education, skills, and temperaments. Utilizing reflective thought and inquired / critical discussions for the extrapolation of meaning, the goal is for the participants in service-learning programs to become more fully realized human beings. For the purpose of this study, *service-learning* will be defined as the combining of learning and service, via experiential and community-based projects which fulfill community needs, and critical reflection mediated through academic coursework, readings, exercises, and discussions. It is important to emphasize that service-learning is not the same as volunteerism. It is not just the service and not just the education/learning, but the critical reflective process that merges both that set service-learning apart. As a volunteer coordinator for a non-profit agency, I hear many reasons why people want to volunteer. Many volunteers state they want to learn new skills (especially if they are un/under/or dissatisfied in employment) and meet new people (for social and networking reasons). They want to feel useful and helpful. They want to make their communities better places to live with stronger connections between the people who live in the communities. I believe that these are the same reasons that service-learning came into being in the first place. After all:

service-learning at its best is reciprocal in nature. It links opportunities to address community issues with equally sound educational experiences for students. It aims at fostering critical thinking and problem solving, civic and community responsibility, and making a contribution to the common good. (Heffner & Beversluis, 2002, p. 126)

I used to think that everyone should be a lifelong volunteer but now that I work as a volunteer coordinator, I see that not all volunteer activities are rewarding, skillful, or cause for reflection and growth. But I believe that they could and should be, through lifelong service-learning. When my children were younger, I brought them with me in my many volunteer activities. Without knowing about service-learning, I intuitively explained to them about our values, about the way to treat people and various ways to interact and communicate. I intuitively looked for ways to tie their service to what they were learning at school. After their service experiences, I asked my children thoughtful questions; I now realize these were critical questions about what they observed, felt, thought, believed, and ultimately linked this knowing to their school subjects, to our life experiences, to our values, and to what they *did* because of their observations, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. I actively listened to them (and discussed) their reflections. Today, my children claim that they are more patient, understanding, accepting, and compassionate due to his process, and comfortable being around many different types of people in many different situation. I realized that I had also used this process for myself when I volunteered, causing much (self) learning. I thought volunteering was the best thing since sliced bread, but it was only recently that I began to understand that adding the questioning and reflection parts were part of what made it special. As I continue to research service-learning, I am more convinced of its benefit.

I fully embrace the concept of volunteering and service. Other people, though, may have a problem with the theory of volunteerism simply because it is considered unpaid *work*. This may cause volunteerism and service to be unvalued or undervalued,



seen as *women's* work, or viewed as of little power or influence. This *Project* also explores other potential problems with service-learning and implementation of such models. For instance, there is a question of whether making volunteering or service a mandatory act diminishes its appeal, its effect, its potency or its efficacy. Not everyone values volunteering or service and therefore a segment of people do not wish to participate in such endeavors. Yet, as a moral issue I feel that humanity could reclaim its humaneness if proper types of volunteering, service and learning, such as is found in service-learning, were made available to more populations. Service-learning might not need to be *mandatory* if more people viewed the experience as stimulating, valuable and valued, exciting, fun, and beneficial.

As an example of how Jewish tradition might assist us in understanding how two seemingly opposite concepts, *voluntary* and *mandatory*, can be merge, I offer the idea of *Mitzvah*. A *Mitzvah* often referred to as *good deed*, is really translated as *commandment*. In Judaism, one is commanded to perform acts of kindness and justice. Many people cringe at this idea stating this interferes with free-will and the personal experience of wanting to be *moved by spirit* before performing acts of loving-kindness. However, the reality is that left to our own devices, the tendency of most people is towards inaction. Even waiting for the *spirit* to engage us towards these kind acts, might cause us to never be engaged with these at all. That is why Rambam, or, as he is more commonly known by the Greek epithet, Maimonides, explains that by following the obligation to do acts of kindness and justice, the spirit actually has more chances to be moved in performing

these deeds on a regular and consistent basis (Maimonides, ben Maimon, & Goldman, 1976).

Therefore, should it be a mandatory requirement to volunteer and provide service? Or is involuntary volunteerism an oxymoron? Generalizing this idea to service-learning, should there need to be a mandatory requirement for service-learning? Should there be a lifelong service-learning expectation? If service-learning becomes a societal expectation, a lifelong venture, a commandment and a conventional experience, would it also become a hegemonic institution of its own or dissolve hegemonic thought? I struggle with these paradoxes and that is why these ideas will be explored further along with the development of additional insights.

One of the hallmarks of service-learning is citizenry development. In the literature, there is much written on service-learning and the development of citizenry. Lisman (1998) claims that coping with social problems to develop social policies “requires a citizenry possessing a broad understanding of the interdependence of people, social institutions, and communities” (p. 3) with an enhanced ability to both draw upon and develop this knowledge as they confront human problems. Heffner (2002) adds that:

this movement has focused on citizenship development - a model that emphasizes active learning in and with the community. Current examinations of service learning explore the impact of service learning on students, faculty, and the communities where service learning is practiced. (p. x-xi)

The importance of active citizenship, active democracy, individual freedom with community responsibility, and empowerment are that these are issues we view and face every day on the television screen, hear about on the radio, and read about in our

newspapers, magazines, and articles. We see the negative effects on our society caused by privileged and manipulative powerbrokers, by the elevation of the status of greed, by systemic apathy, by unbounded consumerism (DeGraaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2005), by erosion of community structures, and by a myriad of other social ills that seem to expand daily. The need for citizenry development is immense and the ability to integrate citizenry development is a hallmark of service-learning.

The integration of citizenry development is only one part of the potential positive impact and appeal of service-learning. Integration can be defined as bringing together and unifying parts to make a whole. Based on service-learning research and my experiences, I believe that there are additional theories and aspects of service-learning that have not yet even been considered towards this integration. Some the formulations I am exploring deal with the underlying processes of this *Project* to unite and integrate service-learning with Jewish epistemologies, with multiple disciplines, with mature adults, with new and alternative places of learning, with new populations that serve and that are served with new theories and practices, with new viewpoints, with lifelong learning processes and goals.

Citizenry development is a buzzword in service-learning education, but Dewey was actually interested in a democratically educated citizenry. It bewilders me that so many people quote, and agree with, Dewey's (1997) teachings that focus on experiential and progressive education yet our educational institutions and communities are slow to adopt and utilize these ideas and ideals. Dewey was also concerned about progressive social change, with participatory or deliberative democracy, with a holistic approach to

education, with inquiry as social or communal, and with being open and open-minded. He did not subscribe to the positivistic (certain single truth) approach of Western epistemology and the authority and domination that accompanied it. I agree with Dewey on many points including the need for experiential, participatory, democratic, holistic, and flexible openness in education.

P. Armstrong (2010) discusses the pedagogy of lifelong learning and about understanding effective teaching and learning in diverse contexts (p. 73). This means that education in new and updated service-learning models might allow older individuals to have greater access to service-learning opportunities, and be served by more integrated service-learning models. Service-learning, for me, means that education and experience are framed in integrative models of service to the community complete with opportunities for discussion and reflection of the service. I envision it as a learning modality with societal acceptance, as a norm, which begins in pre-school, extending to one's dying breath, which might lead to a kinder and more accepting society, and to a more *integrated* society. I wonder if people of all ages, nationalities, social classes, ethnicities, and religions could genuinely interact, graciously communicate, peacefully live, serenely work together, openly understand and accept others, and lovingly serve the communities in which they live as well as the communities beyond. Since I cannot study all of these thoughts and ideas (and the questions they raise), I focused on two ideas to integrate into service-learning which resonant with my background and religion – older people and Judaism.

## **Jewish Epistemology and Values**

Jewish epistemological practices have much to offer educational approaches, particularly service-learning, since Jewish values, beliefs, and ways of knowing are often action-oriented and especially social-action oriented and social-justice oriented. There are certainly many different ways of knowing, and the Jewish way is just one aspect of many other ways. However, I believe that these action-oriented Jewish themes and values can enhance learning functions, community connectedness and care, social responsibility and social justice through text, questioning, and deeds. There is no single way to describe the reality of American epistemological approaches, since the ways of knowing appear to be as diverse as the population. Some scholars might claim that American epistemology has aligned with Western epistemology and its focus on a Eurocentric, white, cognitive, heterosexual, elitist, upper-class/noble, militaristic, dogmatic, male worldview (Carjuzaa, Jetty, Munson, & Veltkamp, 2010) that privileged its own epistemology while devaluing or silencing other epistemologies. Fortunately, this *white privilege* (McIntosh, 1989; Howard, 2004) now shares epistemological lens with indigenous and Native-American, African American and Black, Latin influenced, immigrant, alternative-gendered, feminist, lower-class, religious, other-abled, and even aging populations, communities, cultures and experiences, among others.

Unfortunately, Jewish epistemology is often missing from these lists because it has been substituted by Judeo-Christian epistemology. The term *Judeo-Christian* is really a misnomer because although there are obviously commonalities between Judaism and Christianity, they are many fundamental differences in their foundational ways of

knowing. Therefore, I would like to see Jewish frameworks and concepts added to the ever growing list of epistemologies. In my readings and studies I have come across at least thirty-six Jewish values, beliefs, and ways of knowing that might be of benefit to educational frameworks. Most will be further elaborated on in Chapter III, but here are a few of them: *K'hilah* (community), *Rahamim / Rahmanut* (compassion), *Gemilut Hasadim* (the giving of loving-kindness), *Todah* (gratitude), *Tikvah* (hope), *Hahnasat Orhim* (hospitality), *Zikaron* (collective memory), *Avodah* (service), *Mitzvah* (commandment, obligation, responsibility), *Moda'ut* (mindfulness), *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of G-d), *Tzedakah* (justice), *Hevruta* (relationships), *Yisra'el* (struggling, questioning, and wrestling), and *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world). This is just a sampling of these active and often embodied Jewish epistemologies which could be of great benefit to educational, social, and community frameworks.

Included in this framework are the writings and interpretations of Jewish philosophers such as Buber, Heschel, and Rambam (Maimonides), Jewish educators, such as Waskow, Green, Shapiro, Lerner, Purpel, and Eisler, and non-Jewish philosophers and educational theorists and practitioners, such as Dewey and Knowles. Other theoretical frameworks and strategies will also be employed and described further in subsequent chapters.

### **Research Questions**

From philosophical and practical viewpoints, I am interested in how Jewish frameworks of knowing and doing inform educational theory and practice via the service-learning movement with older adults to:

- improve educational systems and learning,
- enhance community connections,
- inculcate social justice values,
- increase compassion and compassionate acts,
- deepen critical-thinking skills, and
- promote an individual and collective sense of purpose.

The inquiry of this research project serves two purposes. The first is to develop the framework for this model and the second is to study the model's implementation with a group of participants. In Chapter IV, I will take the reader through the process, step by step, of the theories, practices, and research that informed this *Project*.

### **Delimitations**

Since I cannot study this framework on the general population, this study is limited to Jewish participants over the age of fifty who are already volunteers at a social service agency. This *Project* could be undertaken with other groups, including interfaith communities, in the future. The theories and the curriculum may be implemented by other people in other communities but the results of this project should not be extrapolated to the general community at this time. For this project, I often use the word *society* which I take to mean the United States of America, which, in itself, presents a very vast and diverse landscape. Although the research of scholars from other countries might be mentioned in this study, and the concept of a global lifelong service-learning project might be an interesting ultimate ideal, recommendations for global engagement will not be inferred.

## Organization of the Study

In the next chapter, Chapter II, the perspectives of theory, practice, and research set the process and foundation for creation of the *Project*. These perspectives will be interdisciplinary and *trans-epistemic* in nature, meaning that they are not limited to research to my field of study, education, or to Judaism. Through primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, the discoveries, theories, practices and praxis, analyses, interpretations, syntheses, fusions, and findings from philosophers, researchers, social scientists, educators, and many others, are illuminated.

Service-learning formations begin with theory and progress to practice through experiences, service, and reflection. Jewish learning begins with experience and practice, and is reinforced by exploring, questioning, struggling with, reflecting upon, and interpreting sacred texts and oral traditions. These texts and oral traditions include but are not limited to the *Tanakh*, *Bible*, *Talmud*, *Mishnah* and *Midrash* (narratives). In framing this Jewish epistemological exploration, I also reference Jewish philosophers and Jewish educators, as well as more modern Judaic texts and Jewish philosophical underpinnings. However, exploration is not limited to exclusively Jewish texts and contexts as the study spans a multiplicity of perspectives and worldviews. Chapter III illustrates the Jewish framework for service-learning that draws from traditional and modern Jewish concepts and texts. This chapter is framed in traditional Talmudic form, with each Jewish concept placed in the middle of the page with a verse from the *Bible*, surrounded by writings and interpretations of philosophers, educational theorists and



practitioners in the margins, concluding with the implications of these concepts and interpretations for education and for service-learning.

In Chapter IV, I put all the pieces together to create a new service-learning model that draws on Jewish ways of knowing and experiencing with older people. The development of the *Project* metaframework is based on American and Jewish educational and interdisciplinary theories, literature, practices and research from the volunteerism and service, adult education, lifelong learning, and service-learning sectors that were referenced in Chapter II as well as the Jewish epistemology of Chapter III of the study. The *Project* incorporates both the theoretical and practical. This chapter also sets up the methodology for studying this *Project*. This qualitative study focuses on the *action research* process and the collection of data, reports, and narratives culled from participants' reflective journals, e-mails, group discussions and other interaction, as well as evaluations of the process and outcomes by the researcher, the participants and recipient agencies. In Chapter V, I report the study's findings from the implementation of the *Project*. The study follows eleven older adult participants over the span of five months, who are regular volunteers at a Jewish community-based social service organization in a mid-sized southern United States town. These participants provided service at various Jewish and non-Jewish community and non-profit agencies. They participated in thought-provoking and action-oriented activities in an informal academic setting, group discussions, and critically reflective exercises with the help of prompts. The academic portion consisted of a type of Jewish *Bible* and text study mixed with exploration of the Jewish epistemologies and values. This section includes descriptions of

the program and activity, and includes the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the participants. Chapter VI provides a summary of the entire study, discussion of the findings, implications for theory and practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusions. It is my hope that this model might be utilized in other agencies and educational settings.

On the next page is a road map – the journey. Together, we will travel on many roads, made of many different materials and resources, lined with beautiful boulevards of thought and ideas, and decorated with diverse actions and motivations. We will stroll along the interesting side streets of education, philosophy, sociology, economics, psychology, communication, history, arts, language, culture, gender and sexuality, politics, geography, science, logic and faith, engineering, business, agricultural, law, ecology, gerontology, health and medicine, and leisure/recreation. We will discover secret passageways into ancient and present-day religious and secular ways of thinking and doing, and into curricular theories, practices, and research. You will find that the highway to adult education is vastly different from, and in a different part of town than, the thoroughfare leading to education for children. Many people get lost on their way to this adult education road – they know the path they followed to childhood education and cannot understand why there is a need for a different road leading towards adult education. These may seem like twisted and treacherous routes but if you follow in my footsteps you will walk on firm grounding, leading to the path of the *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning* prototype. I offer the following *road map* (Figure 1) to help you steer through this maze. I hope you enjoy the trip!

## The “Halakha High-Way” Concept Road Map. Spokes of the Journey to JIMASL

Each **neighborhood section (categories)** has many **pathways (concepts) or terrains** which provide continuous connections and conduits to, from, and around the **outer and inner corridors (hermeneutic circles)**. As we travel along these pathways, we observe the scenery and landmarks, collect data about our travels to inform us now and in the future, critically reflect on our course, analyze our driving skills, and interpret our ways. Sometimes we build or discover alternative or improved paths; sometimes the routes become overused or decay. As we return or (re)cycle through any of the other passageways back to the JIMASL model, our journey potentially changes or transforms itself.



Figure 1. The Jewishly-Informed Mature Adult Service-Learning Concept Map.

## Summary

This study seeks solutions to the problems of society, the limitations of educational access, and the lack of real world connection. By incorporating new research with ancient texts and techniques this study will conceptualize, construct and implement a new educational service-learning prototype. By combining theoretical foundations with practical representations gleaned from secular and Jewish adult education, lifelong learning, service-learning, and epistemological research and understanding, the subsequent amalgamation might offer something new called *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning*, which might increase community connection and compassion. From this conceptualization, implementation of this *Project* will proceed and the results discussed.

In this introductory chapter, the idea of devaluation was explored – the devaluation of older people and aging, of wisdom, of personal meaning, of critical thinking and reflection, of spiritual and moral principles, of compassion and social justice, of civic engagement, of Jewish epistemology and values, of service-learning. The needs of the people in our communities are great and service-learning as an educational tool and service might be a way to meet these needs. Yet service-learning models might also benefit from expansion and incorporation of new learner populations (such as older persons), new educational settings (such as informal educational opportunities in non-profit organizations), more interdisciplinary and *trans-epistemic* approaches, and Jewish epistemology. Key terms such as adult education, lifelong learning, and service-learning

were defined. There was a discussion about volunteerism versus service-learning, of voluntary versus mandatory, of citizenry development, and of integration.

In the next section, Chapter II, there is an exploration of what other people have theorized, practiced, researched, and written in regard to the issues posed in this chapter. These perspectives bring together adult education, lifelong learning, service-learning, and Jewish frameworks of knowing and doing, to inform educational praxis via a service-learning milieu with mature (over the age of 50) adults as a way to improve educational systems, enhance community connections, inculcate social justice values, deepen critical-thinking skills, and promote an individual and collective sense of purpose.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **PERSPECTIVES ON SECULAR AND JEWISH ADULT EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING, AND SERVICE-LEARNING**

The rabbi of Kobryn once said: “If it were within my power, I would hide everything written by the zaddikim [holy men]. For when a man has too much knowledge, his wisdom is apt to be greater than his deeds.” (Buber, 1948/1969, p. 161)

The goal of this chapter is to explore the rationale for conducting research on the intersection of adult education, lifelong learning, and service-learning without losing sight of the need for the (social) action and caring deeds that might naturally flow from such perspectives. This review of theory and practice is multi-faceted and relies on many parts. Not only is there a focus on education, but also a focus on all the academic fields of study that impact education, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, and even ecology, as well as on epistemologies and the different ways of knowing what we recognize in this world. In this research, resources will be observed through inter-, intra, multi-, and trans-disciplinary perspectives as well as *trans-epistemic* lenses. Disciplinary approaches to ideas and execution vary greatly between these fields and subjects; therefore understanding and using these distinctions can be useful to informing research. Inter-disciplinary approaches involve the interaction of two or more academic subjects with each focus remaining distinct. Intra-disciplinary procedures emphasize the nuances within each discipline. Multi-disciplinary methods work to combine these

separate fields, blurring the borders of each. Trans-disciplinary systems cross over and co-mingle the previously distinct categories, transforming disciplinary study. *Trans-epistemic* goes beyond the idea of transforming disciplines to the idea of transformation through and across different epistemologies, serving to re-claim and re-frame context (Green, 2010. p. 20) and is similar to *participatory epistemology*, a theory that asserts that all aspects and objects of the world, whether they are animate or inanimate, participate with humans (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008, p. 14).

For this chapter, the progression for an adult Jewishly-informed service-learning paradigm is examined through the following three sections: adult education, lifelong learning, and service-learning, with each section containing a progression through, and comparisons between, secular and Jewish perspectives. This research will reveal the basis, and need, for the framework of this *Project* which will then be implemented and researched within a community of older (Jewish) adults in a non-*traditional* non-educational faith-based organization.

### **Adult Education**

Adults come to learning with different motivations and divergent learning needs and styles than do children or teens. Adult education also has a very different epistemology than childhood education. Aging issues need to be considered in this equation, and like childhood, there are different stages and competencies to consider - younger, middle-aged and elderly adults. It is estimated that by 2020, twenty percent of the population in the United States will be over the age of 65 years (Boulton-Lewis, 2010; Szucs, 2001; Martin, 2005), growing twice as fast as any other age group, and this

is expected to continue to grow; by the year 2030 this group will be about 70 million Americans (Martin, 2005, p. 199). Therefore, the needs for adult educational services will also probably also continue to grow as well. Although there is much variation within this demographic population, the *typical* older learner is usually a white woman with at least some college education, receiving middle to high income, who self-reports good health (Bynum & Seaman, 1993). Research and literature suggest the motivations for older adults to participate in educational opportunities include craving intellectual stimulation (Bynum & Seaman, 1993), learning something useful (Puccio, 1995), love of learning (O'Connor, 1987), pursuing an interest (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997), and social contact (Bynum & Seaman, 1993). The reasons that adults do not participate in educational activities include complicated admissions processes (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997), financial concerns (Danner, Danner, & Kuder, 1993), insecurity in classroom settings, transportation and parking problems, health issues, time constraints, insecurity with driving or being out during night time hours, and indifference (Scala, 1996).

### **Andragogy**

Knowles (1973/1990) is the father of adult education, *andragogy*. *Pedagogy*, which is more teacher-directed learning, is considered the art and science of teaching children (Witte & Witte, 2006, p. 30). Knowles, who formulated the concept of *self-directed learning*, felt that there was a deep psychological need for adult learners to be responsible for their own lives. The andragogical model is based on several assumptions that are different from the pedagogical model: (1) the need to know, (2) the learners' self-



concept, (3) the role of the learners' experience, (4) readiness to learn, and (5) orientation to learn (pp. 57-61).

Knowles (1973/1990) felt that the richest sources for learning reside in the adult learners themselves, enhanced by the greater emphasis in adult education on experiential techniques such as group discussion, simulation exercises, problem-solving activities, case studies, and laboratory methods. However, cumulative lifetime experiences could negatively affect adult learning if mental habits and presuppositions close the mind to new ideas, fresh perspectives, and alternative ways of thinking (p. 59). He did not see the andragogical model as an ideology but as a system of alternative sets of assumptions (p. 64). Knowles reported the studies of Thorndike, Jones and Conrad, and Wechsler which showed that learning ability rises from age 10 to 21 - generally peaking at 22- and declining each subsequent year by about 1 percent (p. 155), and perhaps that is why he advocated the creation of lifelong learning communities via a multiple resource system (p. 177). Although andragogy is not always the best form of education in all circumstances, Knowles felt that self-directed learning was best utilized when insight, planning, creativity, problem solving, judgment, and self-confidence were required.

Boulton-Lewis (2010) added that Knowles not only perceived that adults know what they need to learn and believe themselves responsible for their own learning, but they also have a great deal of experience (good and bad), are ready to learn what they believe they need to know, and are life/task/problem-centered. However, Knowles (1990) felt that prior conditioning from previous school experiences could negatively impact the active approach of adult education, especially the reinforced dependency role of student.

Sheridan (2007) wrote that adults bring life experience, self-direction, readiness, and a mature problem-solving approach to learning; therefore changes need to be made in the ways in which information is delivered to them. Content is imbedded in activities designed to engage students, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Therefore, the trained adult educator creates the learning materials, facilitates the process, and works under the assumption that the nature of their shared endeavor is collaborative (p. 8).

Not only is the role of the learner in adult education important but also the role of the teacher. Knowles (1990) also advocated that teachers become *facilitators of learning*, making things happen by releasing the energy of others, continuing personal development, and being proactive. Facilitators can assist in this process of adult education, where learners are not only self-directed but also autonomous. Compared with traditional pedagogy, which places the learner in a state of psychological dependency on the teacher, andragogy emphasizes self-directed learning in which the teacher is more of a process designer (Knowles, 1977). Pinar (1999) asserts that the interest of the teacher is not to teach, in the usual sense of imparting well-formulated epistemologies, but to protect the conditions under which students in their own way find their way (p. 467). Knowles (1990) especially believed that all trainers of adults were capable of learning to be facilitators of self-directed learners, but that these facilitators must move out of the dependency model. The idea is to move beyond the idea of *controlling* learners to experiencing the joy that comes from *releasing* learners to become excited by their own learning and learning projects.

Of course there are criticisms and critiques of andragogy. These include insufficient empirical research to justify the dominance of andragogy in the field of adult education, unproductive debates framed along the binary paths, and its lack of Afrocentric, feminist, and critical thought (Henschke, 2011, p. 34). Indeed, the use of the term andragogy from the Greek *andro* meaning *male*, immediately and potentially excludes half of the adult education population. The andragogy approach to adult education remains the most learner-centered of all patterns of adult educational programming and that is why it has gained the widest acceptance. This is also why parts of it will be incorporated into the *Project*. In addition, this andragogy approach is more respectful, trusting, supportive, collaborative and humanistic (Henschke, 2011, p. 35). For older adults, this approach centered on the learner is a better way to be educated and to learn.

Negative attitudes about older adults and their ability to learn are still prevalent and need to be examined. Stine-Morrow, Parisi, Morrow, Greene, and Park (2007) explain that the social construction of old age as a time of decreasing intellectual ability encourages the very conditions that may not be favorable to cognitive and intellectual growth. In addition, learning and well-being have been linked in various studies, increasing not just awareness but also participation in learning. Learning, and the creation of autonomous, self-directed individuals, implies a risk to learners (hooks, 1994) and to social cohesion and norms. These autonomous learners with their critical thinking styles might not defer to established societal standards and institutions, thereby creating their own set of issues, such as societal rejection or self-induced isolation. This is why Maehl

(2003) reminds us that “the freedom of choice rests with them, but so also does the burden of responsibility in what some call critically reflective societies” (p. 1482).

### **Models of Adult Education Programs**

For older adults there are many opportunities to learn. For formal and adult education, colleges and universities generally offer tuition-waiver programs for existing courses. Elderhostel programs offer another type of institution-driven model of learning, and the Learning in Retirement Institute Model or LRIs offer a member-driven option. LRIs are campus based learning organizations for older adults sponsored by colleges or universities. The participants are usually people over the age of 60 who pay some type of fee, are instrumental in determining the topics, and often teach the courses that are offered. The idea is that older people are able to contribute and produce resources and not merely consume them (Martin, 2005, p. 202). Although these LRIs are member-driven, they continue to partner with their sponsoring colleges. Martin (2005) noted that the key to partnership success is that the relationship is less like a contractual arrangement and more like a marriage in which each partner contributes to its success (p. 210).

### **Jewish Adult Education**

Adult Jewish education is framed through the complex intersection of religion, ethnicity and culture. The term *Adult Jewish Education* might seem “at first a curious and ill-defined way to describe provisions enabling adults to learn about the Jewish tradition and grow as Jews” (Ruppin, 2006, p. 61), and as human beings. Modern Jewish progressive adult education from an academic standpoint emerged in the early 1900s with

Franz Rosenzweig, who was a friend of, and major influence of, the philosopher and educator Martin Buber. In the 1920s, Rosenzweig was one of the first to discuss and design Jewish non-Rabbinic, non-yeshiva, adult Jewish education. His aim was to bring in those alienated from Judaism in order to reclaim the Jewish culture, religion and traditions (Ulmer, 2007) and to find meaningful ways to bring knowledge from the world outside to experiences within the Jewish community (Schuster, 2003). The name that Rosenzweig chose, Freies Judisches Lehrhaus (Free House of Jewish Studies), was intentionally chosen because it would become a modernized adult and Jewish education. The word *Free* implied *free access* and *free discussions*, the spirit of Jewish learning.

A completely new concept in his time, Rosenzweig saw teachers as "conductors in the choir of questioners" (Ulmer, 2007). Similar to Knowles (1990) and his andragogy concept of teachers as facilitators, or even as mentors (Mullen, 2007; Daloz, 1999; Zelda & Lee, 1995; Sims, 2010), Rosenzweig envisioned the model of simultaneous teacher and disciple. Rosenzweig saw the role of Jewish education as a tool of engagement, in the communal context, envisioning Jewish learning whose participants were equipped with a sense of Jewish history, contributing to its shaping (Paley, 2010). In 1921, Buber was attracted by the Lehrhaus method. He was in the process of writing his seminal work, *I and Thou* (which became the basis for his Lehrhaus lectures), establishing an intellectual dialogue between lecturer and student (Ulmer, 2007). For Buber (1970/1996) the education is in the (I-Thou) Encounter, through dialogue (and this encounter will be discussed further in the next chapter).

The role of the Jewish student in adult Jewish education is to be a full participant in that education. This means not only a full participant in the learning but also a full participant in determining what was to be learned. This was a new concept at the time - teachers usually determined the course of study and their students (of all ages) compliantly agreed and became passive recipients of information (Knowles, 1990; Freire, 2001). In addition to passive education, pedagogies for children were (and sometimes still are) often applied to adult education. These included the largely repetitious methodologies used in educating children (Epstein, 1982). Learning is often best retained while solving a problem, usually with a group of people discussing options. This type of engaged learning is consistent with the Rabbinic Period and the Middle Ages Jewish literature and sources, as well as with andragogy's focus on the problem-centered approach to learning (Epstein, 1982).

According to Ruppin (2006), there are three different ways of looking at adult Jewish education from a Progressive perspective: (1) from the varied and complex nature of the Jewish heritage, (2) from the dynamic interactions between change and tradition, and (3) from the current context in which we live. The challenge for any educator working in this field is to try to find ways of creating frameworks in which these complex dialogues can take place while taking into account the shifts in the way Jews perceive, define and construct their identities (p. 73). Ruppin (2006) suggests that instead of having a list of topics or curriculums for Jewish adult education, it is the role of the educator to create contexts or a community in which the interaction between the Jewish tradition and the contemporary world are experienced and struggled with.

## **Types of Adult Educational Settings**

Active, self-directed, and facilitated learning can take place in many different educational situations. Many people believe that education only occurs in traditional settings such as schools and universities. Many people place higher value on education in more formal and traditional *school* settings rather than in less formal settings.

However, Witte and Witte (2006) identified four types of adult educational paradigms that meet the needs of adults in developing their skills and knowledge. Type I paradigms are independent adult education agencies which are private (or privately funded) education agencies. These include correspondence schools, technical, trade and business schools, and residential adult centers. Type II educational institutions are those in which adult education is not their primary function (but might be their secondary function).

These include places which generally serve teens and young adults as opposed to mature adults such as public school adult education, community colleges, universities, cooperative extension service, community education, and evening colleges, Type III institutions are quasi-educational organizations, which serve the educational and non-educational needs of the community. These include libraries, museums, community and religious organizations, “Y”s, senior citizen centers, health agencies, welfare agencies, theater, art, and other community interests. Type IV institutions are non-educational organizations where adult education is a subordinate function but still serves the educational interest of their special groups. These include the armed forces, unions, hospitals, government agencies, and trade associations (Witte & Witte, 2006).

In the discussion of formal versus informal settings for adult education, much of adult Jewish education has been in informal settings, usually in Type III quasi-educational organizations, as outlined by Witte and Witte (2006). The *Project* will be housed in this Type III educational arrangement. However, this arrangement should not demean the value of the educational experience, especially since Knowles successfully tested and refined his theories and designs on a broad spectrum of numerous settings such as corporate, business, industry, health care, governmental, higher education, religious education, and elementary, secondary and remedial educational settings (Henschke, 2011, p. 34).

Formal Jewish Adult education programs, such as The Florence Melton Adult Jewish Learning Mini-School (FMAMS), have their place. For instance, these FMAMS, part of a social franchise, form an international network of community-based schools offering adults the opportunity to acquire Jewish literacy in an open, trans-denominational, intellectually stimulating learning environment. Founded in 1986, FMAMS is the largest pluralistic adult Jewish education network in the world, with 62 Mini-Schools in 60 cities throughout the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia, attended weekly by some 5,500 students. Students enroll in a sequential two-year course developed specifically for adult learners. Participants meet one day a week throughout the academic year. There are no examinations - only a commitment to learn. According to their website, the Mini-Schools infuse students with a desire to make Jewish learning a way of life (<http://meltonschool.org/>).



Although Judaism has fundamental tenets and assumptions, there is not a system of dogmas to teach as there is in Christianity. The reason for this is that much of the Jewish tradition is concerned with issues of practice (Ruppin, 2006, p. 63). Powell and Aaron (2007) write about informal Jewish education (IJE) and the idea of “first we touch, and then we teach” - learning from doing (much like experiential and service-learning). IJE has been an integral component of Jewish education for literally thousands of years, although known by many different labels such as storytelling, enacting bible stories, and performing bibliodrama. Knowles (1990) adds that the ancient Chinese and Hebrews invented what we would now hold as the case method, in which the leader or one of the group members would describe the situation, often in the form of a parable, and then together explore its characteristics and possible resolutions (p. 27). The Passover Seder, according to Powell and Aaron (2007), is an IJE experience, where one learns by experiencing slavery and subsequent freedom. Shapiro (2006) articulates that the Passover Seder is also a pedagogical experience. It is an embodied learning experience; for example the dipping into the saltwater signifying the tears of slaves, the eating the *bitter herbs* personifying the bitterness of slavery, and the breaking of Matzah symbolizing the *bread of oppression* (p. 119), to name a few, all enact the experience of slavery.

Since IJE is different from formalized, classroom-based Jewish education, attempts to define and understand it as its own mode of education have been problematic. How does one measure and evaluate such informal education? Until recently, the prevailing attitude among formal Jewish educators was that:

if IJE could not be defined and delineated as clearly as the concepts and categories of formal Jewish education, then it was not actually education but rather programming that tangentially supplemented education. (p. 267)

Such educational categories and privileged viewpoints could be seen as barriers to Jewish adult education.

These barriers to Jewish adult education might be, or might not be, physical, social, intellectual, or psychological. Pediatric Judaism, a term widely used to describe learning that stops at the age of bar/bat mitzvah (12 or 13) or never enhances beyond a child's view of Jewish text and holidays (Schuster, 2003), is a factor for those considering adult Jewish education. These early experiences shape present thinking, belief and emotional response. When Jewish adults partake in Jewish education, most are in unknown territory, exploring Judaism on new terms or interacting with the Jewish community in new ways (Schuster, 2003; Eilberg, 2000). There is often a risk in Jewish education and learning, whether from an intellectual, emotional or spiritual perspective, since there is often a divide between the experience and practice of Jewish life and meaningful Jewish learning that informs that experience and practice. Such is why Jewish educators need to make people feel welcomed as part of a community (Maslow, 1970) in order to capture the joy of Jewish learning (Schuster, 2003).

### **Summary of Adult Education**

Adult education and learning models range from formal to informal, from traditional to non-traditional, from passive to self-directed, from personal development to socially driven, from the importance of the roles of students and teacher to the role of society. Adoption of many of these active (as opposed to passive) principles and concepts

of adult education, such as self-directed learning, personal development and self-identity, and pleasure in learning, will guide the adult education portion in the development of the *Project*, through hybrid structures that meet the needs of the adult learners in community settings. For instance, classroom settings might take on an informally-formal *schooling* dimension at non-profit agencies instead of the university setting, through non-traditional locations using traditional and non-traditional texts, via the roles of teacher-student blurred into co-learning and hermeneutic configurations. The focus now shifts from simply adult education to a more comprehensive paradigm – lifelong learning.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Shifting from the larger almost impersonal topic of education to the personal paradigm of learning, this section also shifts from *just* adult education to a lifelong learning model. Even the term *lifelong learning*, which was formulated as a concept in the 1970s, focuses on the *learning* rather than on *education*. Some of the benefits of continual learning include improved quality of life, health, brain function, wisdom, social involvement and interactions, community productively and engagement, life enjoyment and satisfaction, self-confidence, feelings about self, coping ability (Boulton-Lewis, 2010; WHO, 2002) and productive aging (Ardelt, 2000; Dench & Regan, 2000). Changes in life expectancy and health are factors in the ways that people spend their time in later life, including learning. Not only do lifelong learners become involved in these activities for the physical health benefits, but also for personal development (Stine-Morrow, Parisi, Morrow, Greene, & Park, 2007), and the research shows that a majority of people pursuing lifelong learning do so for intrinsic reasons (Szucs, 2001). However,

most recent surveys also report that older people participate in learning or learning activities less than younger adults, although, according to Percy and Frank (2011), some of the statistics are largely unreliable and not comparable, since the surveys might be designed to increase public expenditure for education.

Yet the participation in learning of these older adults can be described as “the liberation of the elders” (Glendenning & Battersby, 1990). The liberation comes as they develop the critical and advocacy skills necessary to counteract the social and financial disadvantages exaggerated or caused by older age (Glendenning & Battersby, 1990). In addition, learning might be more meaningful and immediate if older people’s experiences are taken into account and integrated into those educational and learning settings (Withnall & Percy, 1994). Therefore, any educational situation setup for older people that does not attempt to assist them to find the answers to a different set of questions than that of the typical academy might be missing the opportunity for very real engagement in people’s changing lives, especially related to self-identity (Billig, Holland, & Moely, 2009).

Percy and Frank (2011) reported about the Senior Learners’ Programme at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom in which the aim of the program was to give senior learners space – space to learn about themselves and their past and space to transcend that past and to redesign the future. The program was designed as a weekly day-long learning opportunity throughout the university year and was launched at almost the same time that the United Kingdom adopted the European directive that there should be no age discrimination in publicly provided courses of education. They reported on the

program and its evolution. Regarding the learning of older adults, Percy and Frank (2011) suggest moving:

beyond the restrictions of dichotomous terminology of teaching and learning, of directed and self-directed learning, of formal, non-formal and informal learning, of theoretical and experiential learning. It is not so much that we need a new paradigm; it is rather that we need a more extended and sophisticated paradigm that has no unnecessary barriers and that sets free the energy, capacity, experience and curiosity of senior learners and assist them to transcend the past and to make progress in the search for new meanings, identities and features. (p. 140)

Sadler (2006) identifies four age frameworks to reinterpret life course, impacting lifelong learning: (1) First Age (Preparation), (2) Second Age (Achievement), (3) Third Age (Fulfillment), and (4) Fourth Age (Completion). Third and Fourth Age can be a redesigned paradigm for successful aging and learning. Life after age 50 brings a new chapter. Withnall (2000) suggests that a possible way forward in respect of the *Third Age* would be to change the current emphasis from *education* to *learning* and to investigate what meaning older people actually ascribed to learning by locating it within a life course perspective. Rowe and Kahn's (1987) model of successful aging has 3 components: (1) minimizing risk and disability, (2) engaging in active life, and (3) maximizing physical and mental activities. Crowther, Parker, Achenbaum, Larimore, and Koenig (2002) would add a fourth conceptually distinct factor- (4) maximizing positive spirituality.

Since most people consider their formal education over by the time they graduate high school or college, lifelong learning focuses on lifetime human potential. These include gaining new skills and wisdom, in places beyond formal institution such as in civic participation and informal self-initiated activities. That is why, according to Maehl

(2003), “society should make these systems available to learners with flexibility and diversity” (pp. 1481-2). Much of the literature leaves the *system* of adult education open to meet the needs of specific groups of adults. Even the Mondale Lifelong Learning Act of 1976 included almost twenty areas, ranging from adult basic education to education for older and retired persons, but proved too diffuse to address with public policy (Maehl, 2003, p. 1481).

### **Problems and Concerns - Informal Learning, Access, and Privilege**

The term *lifelong learning* is also seen as more casual than the term *lifelong education* which is seen as more explicitly intentional. Much of literature views the movement as needing to focus on development of (work) skills, while others see it as a vehicle for personal development, including humanistic and democratic ideals. Some feel the movement should begin in our formative years; most feel that it should encompass only later stages of life, although the appeal for the former idea is re-emerging. Formal lifelong adult education and learning, according to U.S. figures, is divided into six categories - (1) English as a second language (ESL), (2) adult basic education and high school completion courses, (3) postsecondary credential programs, (4) apprenticeship programs, (5) work-related courses, and (6) personal development courses. The largest categories of participation were work-related and personal development courses. Informal learning was not included in these categories (Maehl, 2003, p. 1481).

Wilson and Simson (2003) write of combining lifelong learning with civic engagement, using a university-based model. According to Maehl (2003), U.S. data for

1998-1999 show that an estimated 90 million persons (46% of adults) had enrolled in a course during the preceding twelve months, which is an increase from 32 percent in 1991. Such increasing adult education enrollment highlights the need of such programs. The most common reasons given for not learning were lack of time and interest. The strongest barriers were physical disabilities and the weakest ones were interactions with other people (Boulton-Lewis, 2010).

Research on lifelong learning literature found problems with access, especially for less educated persons who are usually of color and lower economic status, and with input, especially in terms of what is *taught*. In our post-modern society, there is a dispute about what classifies as knowledge-production. People still cling to certainty and binary oppositions. Kang (2007) argues “that insofar as we continue with the adjective-plus-learning theory, we cannot escape binary thought” (p. 205). She proposes a new concept, *rhizoactivity*, to navigate multiplicity of adult learning theory and lifelong learning in a postmodern world, much as a tree has many branches and roots, or a garden has many plants from which to choose, all with distinctive beauty and purpose. In addition *coherence theories* of learning begins by rejecting the assumption that there are these binaries and radical divisions between bodies and minds, selves and others, individuals and collectives, knowers and knowledge, and humans and on humans (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2008, p. 98).

### **Jewish Lifelong Learning**

Education and learning are hallmarks of Judaism and lifelong learning is one of its precepts. According to Kodesh (1997) lifelong education is one of the oldest values of

Jewish heritage. He suggests that modern adult education might adopt certain ideas from Judaism's proven educational insights - the lifelong aspect of learning and learning in various settings. As with general adult education, in Jewish lifelong learning the role of the teacher is as facilitator. However, facilitation can take on many meanings. Facilitation could be in the Buberian fashion of facilitators as developer of interpersonal *encountered* relationships (Buber, 1970/1996). Even the administrators of Jewish adult education and lifelong learning programs should possess skills as a facilitator - a facilitator of caring. Grant (2004) studied administrators in a particular Jewish adult education program, finding that moral leadership shaped by an ethic of caring helps build learning communities.

Such is why the Elderhostel movement took off (Martin, 2005), especially within the Jewish community. This was demonstrated by the consistently full enrollment in elder hostels, especially with Jewish themes (Schuster, 2003). One of the most well-known and successful lifelong learning member-driven organization partnered with universities is Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLI). Headquartered at the University of Southern Maine (USM), OLLI serves as the national center for the current network of 117 lifelong learning institutes throughout the nation. Each Osher Institute reflects the culture of its own university and its learning community. However, according to its blog, there is an issue of diversity. A majority of the members are white and middle-class, and sometimes predominantly Jewish, such as at Brandeis University where only 15% of OLLI members are non-Jewish (<http://usm.maine.edu/olli/national/>). With the demographics showing



increasing adult populations and healthy aging patterns of Americans, more adults, and more Jewish adults, have and will want to participate in lifelong learning activities.

### **Summary of Lifelong Learning**

From the literature on lifelong learning, a pattern emerges in which motivation, need, and reward are intrinsic, and learning takes places in spaces of struggle, spaces of relationship and connection, and spaces of community. Another community of learners who also volunteer, the service-learning community, will be explored in the next section.

### **Service-Learning**

According to Speck and Hoppe (2004), service-learning is seen as a remedy for a fractured community. According to Kelshaw, Lazarus, and Minier (2009), service-learning is essentially pedagogical – the processes and consequences pertaining to teaching and learning – with service-learning partnerships affecting relationships and resources in communities (p. xvii). Service-learning is a way of knowing in the world - a way of knowing in partnership. Based on the research of Holland and Robinson (2007), both community-based and service-learning can be distinguished by the following characteristics: (1) clear learning objectives that connect classroom learning to community based learning, (2) service activities that address the community-identified need, (3) community partners who act as co-educators and contribute to student learning, (4) an activity that insures benefits to both the student and the community within exchange of knowledge that strengthens both parties, (5) connections to the learning goals established through rigorous and intellectually challenging reflection activities, and

(6) consequential assessment strategies capturing student learning outcomes and informing partnership improvement (p. 19).

Yet service-learning is not a monolith. Kaye (2010) identifies four distinct types of service-learning categories: (1) direct services (person-to-person such as tutoring), (2) indirect service (benefits the community without seeing recipients, such as sorting at a food bank), (3) advocacy (creating awareness or promoting action in an issue for members who cannot speak for themselves, such as writing letters or public speaking), and (4) research (gathering and reporting on information in the public interest) all of which offer benefits to students and communities, although “direct service and advocacy have the greatest long-term impact on knowledge gained and personal value recognized” (p. 11).

As the partnership of service and learning became more intimately connected, the literature started to use the term *service-learning* (Thomsen, 2006, p. 7). The hyphen (-) is a symbolic nexus that links practice and theory so that they are no longer two separate activities but symbiotic (Speck & Hoppe, 2004, p. viii). Service-learning has been shown to improve participants’ self-identity and acceptance of others, contribute to moral development, build leadership skills (Furco & Billig, 2002), and create a sense of ethics (Furco & Billig, 2002) among youth. Therefore, one might imagine service-learning having similar benefits for adults (Smith, 2008, p. 6).

### **The History and Evolution of Service-Learning**

Service-learning has evolved over the past 100 years. Much research on service-learning shows that high quality programs demonstrate outcomes, in which students show

increased civic mindedness and enhanced participation within communities, are more accepting of diverse populations, think more critically and globally, foster integrated learning, and perform better academically (Furco & Root, 2010). Service-learning is a “pedagogical strategy that incorporates traditional academic classroom knowledge with public or civic engagement within a selected community” (Bubriski & Semaan, 2009, p. 1), along with critical reflection of the knowledge and engagement/experience to transform the learning and learner (Kaye, 2010). The term *Service Learning* was not even used until 1966. It was not even a formed concept until 1990. (Learn and Serve America - <http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning>). Service-Learning is an evolutionary step through the cooperative education and experiential learning movements. Service-learning continues to evolve, as the following history will illustrate.

Using the history timeline from the Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) as an outline for this section, the history of the service-learning movement will come into focus. NSLC “supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade twelve, community-based organizations, tribal programs, and all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning techniques and methodologies” ([http://www.servicelearning.org/what\\_is\\_service-learning/history](http://www.servicelearning.org/what_is_service-learning/history)). This history shows the progression from cooperative education to service-learning through a chronological format.

### **Cooperative and Experiential Education.**

In 1903, the Cooperative Education Movement was founded at the University of Cincinnati. Cooperative Education is a broad category, combining schooling with real-life *employment* opportunities. This movement focuses on a number of issues but especially the benefit of connected learning, cognitive development, and critical pedagogy. Around 1905, John Dewey developed the intellectual foundations to service-based learning. Review of literature on this subject shows that many of the scholars feel that Dewey is a critical resource for the theory and practice of civic engagement and of democratic citizenship. For Dewey, learning was primarily an activity which arises from the personal experience of grappling with a problem. This concept of learning implied a theory of education far different from the dominant school practice of his day, when students passively received information (Freire, 2001) that had been packaged and predigested by teachers and textbooks. Dewey believed that schools did not provide genuine learning experiences but only an endless amassing of facts, which were fed to the students, who gave them back and soon forgot them (Soltis, 2002, p. 579). Therefore today, based on Dewey, service-learning is being pragmatically involved in community and communication via reflective and collaborative inquiry (Naples & Bojar, 2002) and communication, open mindedness and toleration of uncertainty, a probing of reality, imaginative creativity (Cohen, 2000, Csikszentihalyi, 1996), experimentation, development of skills and habits, and the feeling of belonging and faith in the value of the contributions we make to the group. Soltis (2002) continues that:

although learning experiences may be described in isolation, education for Dewey consisted in the cumulative and unending acquisition, combination, and reordering of such experiences. Rather, educational growth consists in combining past experiences with present experiences in order to receive and understand future experiences. To grow, the individual must continually reorganize and reformulate past experiences in the light of new experiences in a cohesive fashion. (p. 580)

In a step towards lifelong service-learning, Dewey, his interpreters, and followers added the dimension of civic engagement to forge democratic ideals and citizenship. Dewey defined the educational process as a continual reorganization, reconstruction and transformation of experience. His emphasis was on experience as the learning and as the improvement vehicle. Soltis (2002) claims that “it is this natural form of learning from experience, by doing and then reflecting on what happened, which Dewey made central in his approach to schooling” (p. 579).

### **National and Public Service Programs.**

In 1910, American philosopher William James envisioned non-military national service in his essay *The Moral Equivalent of War* in which he argued for a form of organized national service that foresaw the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s as well as later programs such as VISTA and AmeriCorps, all precursors to service-learning. James saw the mind not as something to be filled with facts, but a complex and growing organism, of which the mind was but one feature. James defined education not in only intellectual terms but defined education as uniting emotion and action. Education was seen as the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies to behavior, therefore “to think is the moral act” (Barzun, 2002, pp. 1335-6).

In 1915, some Folk Schools in Appalachia became two- and four-year colleges with work, service, and learning connected. These Folk Schools were seen as community service not philanthropy, as leadership development, and as education from real-life experience. All are present aspects of service-learning. From 1933-1942, through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created by Franklin D. Roosevelt, millions of young people served terms of 6 to 18 months to help restore the nation's parks, revitalize the economy, and support their families and themselves. From this service-learning evolved as a vehicle for achieving potential for making connections, for developing community minded professionals and for building a better society.

In 1935, the Work Projects Administration (WPA) was established creating public work for people who needed jobs. Articles written for popular magazines of their time, in the Nation, (Sann, 1937), and in the Saturday Evening Post (1937) praised the connection of learning to service. In 1944, the GI Bill linked service and education, offering Americans educational opportunity in return for service to their country. In 1945, Lawrence Galton (1945) wrote an article in the Saturday Evening Post favorably commenting on a curriculum including the idea of community service and education as experiential and fun.

In the 1960s, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program were developed to engage older Americans in the work of improving the nation (but learning was not mentioned). Articles related to these programs concentrated on restructuring volunteer roles in order to expand productive contributions of older volunteers and conducting demonstration

programs to test the feasibility of high-intensity, high-responsibility volunteering. There was also data on unpaid productive work in national planning (Morris & Caro, 1996; Jones, 2008). A prominent idea was that *civic responsibility* was an important element of an adequate education at all levels of learning that could “achieve positive outcomes through collaborative efforts to affect change at the individual, community, policy, and social structural levels” (Peacock, Flythe, & Jones, 2006a; Naples & Bojar, 2002b). This idea focused on the service of the seniors, but not on the simultaneous continual learning of these RSVP volunteers.

Intergenerational service-learning programming programs can be mutually beneficial on an institutional as well as an individual basis (Peacock & O’Quin, 2006b) and the US government (2003) Committee on Aging paid extensive attention to the possible need for additional government funding for seniors to participate in service. Freedman (1994) found that national service offered an appealing way to engage senior citizens in filling the unmet needs of education, health care, public safety, the environment, and other vital areas. He felt that linking seniors with national service might help alleviate the country's pressing domestic problems, enhance older people’s personal development, and bolster the nation's flagging sense of community.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps, with authorizing legislation approved by Congress on September 22, 1961. Kristof (2010) writes that “a generation ago, the most thrilling program for young people was the Peace Corps. Today, it's Teach for America, which this year has attracted 46,000 applicants who are competing for about 4,500 slots” (p.1). In 1964, as part of the *War on Poverty*, President

Lyndon B. Johnson created VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a National Teacher Corps, the Job Corps, and University Year of Action. VISTA provides opportunities for Americans to serve full-time to help thousands of low-income communities. In addition, the White House Fellows program was established. Articles on these programs outline educational opportunities in community action, engaging in active citizenship and assessment and evaluation of these programs - mostly in a favorable light.

In 1965, College work-study programs were established. Hamm (2009) reports that low-income students gain valuable work experience and money by often filling jobs that are difficult to fill, such as seasonal positions, and in 1966, the Urban Corps (sometimes called the Urban Peace Corps) emerged, funded with federal work-study dollars ([www.NYC.gov](http://www.NYC.gov)).

### **The Beginnings of the Term and Use of Service-Learning.**

Around 1966 and 1967 the *service-learning* phrase was used to describe a TVA-funded project in East Tennessee with Oak Ridge Associated Universities, linking students and faculty with tributary area development organizations. By 1971, the White House Conference on Youth report was full of calls for linking service and learning. Also, the National Center for Public Service Internships was established, and the Society for Field Experience Education (these two merged in 1978 to become the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education).

In 1971, the National Student Volunteer Program, which became the National Center for Service-Learning in 1979, was established. Published Synergist was a journal promoting the linking service and learning. By 1973, there was discussion of the idea of



the Army being a domestic service corps. In 1976, California Governor Jerry Brown established the California Conservation Corps, the first non-federal youth corps at the state level. Youth Unemployment was the topic of the day in the mid to late 1970s. Even the Joint Economic Committee in Washington held a hearing about the subject and the concept of service-learning at the Ninety-Fourth Congress in 1976. In 1978, the Young Adult Conservation Corps created small conservation corps in the states with 22,500 participants age 16 to 23.

In 1979, the *Three Principles of Service-Learning* was published in the *Synergist* by Robert Sigmon, who is now known as the creator/ father of service-learning, According to Sigmon (1979) service-learning focuses on both those being served and those serving. His three principles of service-learning are: those being served control the services provided; those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions; those who serve also are learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned.

In 1967 Robert Sigmon and William Ramsey coined the term *service learning* to describe a project in East Tennessee with Oak Ridge Associated Universities that linked students and faculty with external organizations. As the term and practices associated with it spread over the next two decades, practitioners and scholars struggled to define it. Various terms used for service-learning included civic engagement or learning, fieldworking, community literacy, public scholarship, global citizenship, and community-based research (Sigmon, 1974; 1979; 1994). Many of these terms are overlapping, but some have subtle or substantive differences. Scholars and practitioners appear to agree on

a definition of service-learning as a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities (Sigmon, 1994).

In the 1980s, national service efforts were launched at the grassroots level, including the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (1984) and Campus Compact (1985) to help mobilize service programs in higher education; the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (1985) to help replicate youth corps in states and cities; National Youth Leadership Council (1982) to help prepare future leaders; and Youth Service America (1985) to give young people a chance to serve. Even a future presidential candidate, Gary Hart (& Torricelli, 1985) wrote in the New York Times a proposal to create a system of universal national service.

### **Practices, Principles, and Legislation.**

In 1989, the Wingspread Principles of Good Practice in Service-Learning were written, with more than seventy organizations collaborating on identifying these ten program principles:

1. engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good;
2. provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service;
3. articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved;
4. allows for those with needs to define those needs;
5. clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved;
6. matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances;
7. expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment;
8. includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals;
9. insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved;
10. is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

(Honnet & Poulsen, 1989)

In 1989 and 1990, President George H. Bush created the Office of National Service in the White House and the Points of Light Foundation to foster volunteering, and in 1990, Congress passed, and President Bush signed into law, the National and Community Service Act of 1990. This legislation authorized grants to schools to support service-learning and demonstration grants for national service programs to youth corps, nonprofits, and colleges and universities. Learn and Serve America was established (as Serve-America), and this legislation also authorized establishment of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (where gratefully for this researcher much of the information on service-learning is kept and nicely organized).

In 1992, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted mandatory service requirement which becomes effective in 1993 and affected the graduating class of 1997 and beyond. In 1993, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) endorsed the importance of linking service with learning. In September 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Service. The legislation united Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA and Learn and Serve America into one independent federal agency. Bernstein and Cock (1993) consider appropriate models for national service. Then in 1994, Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994, charging the Corporation for National Service with taking the lead in organizing Martin Luther King Day as a day of service. The Stanford Service-Learning Institute was created

and it was the beginning of the Ford Foundation/United Negro College Fund Community Service Partnership Project (a 10-college program linking direct service and learning).

### **Service-Learning and Education**

In 1995, the Service-Learning network was on the Internet, via the University of Colorado Peace Studies Center. The School of Education at Pittsburgh University (1996) published articles on the essentials of service-learning and experiential learning in schools and higher education (Kraft & Kielsmeier, 1995) which addressed this movement. In April 1997, the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, chaired by General Colin Powell, brought together President Clinton, former Presidents Bush, Ford, and Carter, and Mrs. Reagan to recognize and expand the role of AmeriCorps and other service programs in meeting the needs of America's youth.

In 1997, the Fourth of July Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education was published. Wingspread Declaration Renewing the Civic Mission of the American University was published. Service-learning ideas spread to all areas of the college experience and all disciplines (Lisman & Harvey, 2000; Hironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1999). In 2001, the first International Conference on Service-Learning Research was held at the Wingspread conference on student civic engagement (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). In 2002, the USA Freedom Corps, a coordinating council and White House office, was launched to help Americans answer President George W. Bush's nationwide call to service (Hubbert, 2002). In 2003, President George W. Bush created the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to recognize the valuable contributions of volunteers, and the council created the President's Volunteer Service

Award program as a way to thank and honor Americans who inspire others to engage in volunteer service. The idea of greater connections -connecting school, youth development, and community came into clearer focus (Taylor & McGlynn, 2009) along with connecting continuous, interactive, and online with experiential learning for adults (Riedel, Endicott, & Wasescha, 2007).

This history of service-learning explains the non-linear and multidimensional growth of the service-learning movement and how various issues organically arose from the wide praxis termed service-learning. Below are some of the issues that inform this study.

### **Non-Traditional Students and Service-Learning.**

One of the populations that has not been part of or studied in service-learning is older people. What exactly does *older* mean? Usually universities consider older individuals to be over the age of 26, however, there is a huge difference between a 26 year old and a 65 year old, in terms of most everything in life including work experiences, family legacies (children, grandchildren and often great-grandchildren), diversity and length of life experiences, development of expectations and coping strategies, and hope of future plans. This issue was raised in the research of Rosenberg, Reed, Statham and Rosing (2012) who surveyed 919 service-learning undergraduate college students from three Midwestern campuses using 18 common statement that measured perceptions of service-learning. The results showed that older students felt that service-learning enhance the content of the courses but significantly less so than younger students, especially first generation students. Working students were less enthusiastic

about the value of service-learning for the development of their personal skills than others (p. 157). Part of that might be linked to the emphasis in research of the vocational aspects of some service-learning program, as opposed to other forms of personal development and satisfaction.

Although civic engagement is a stated goal of most service-learning programs, I feel that there is a tendency towards utilization of service-learning in the high school and college settings as a form of vocational exploration and skills development. Kristof (2010) writes that a well-managed service-learning program could reduce programmatic support and coordination related costs, while providing the students with future job related experience and skills (p. 1). Those job related experiences and skills could benefit populations not generally thought of as needing vocational training, in particular adults who *already* possess vocations skills but could probably profit from additional exposure to other vocational experiences and skills via service-learning (K. Johnson, Elliott, Adams, & Stein, 2010).

However, this presents another societal preconception and barrier. Older people are generally thought to be fully developed in their vocational skills or not interested in/capable of learning additional skills. As mentioned previously, many working adults and retirees have no access to service-learning opportunities because they are not in *traditional* educational settings, such as universities. In addition, these *school* settings often place vocational training and development over personal development and self-fulfillment which are not always seen as valuable *goals*. I believe that many working adults, especially those who are unemployed, as well as retirees, could benefit from

professional and personal development through participation in service-learning programs at non-profit agencies, schools, and even businesses.

As with Witte and Witte (2006)'s adult educational settings paradigms, service-learning programs are slowly moving beyond *traditional* educational settings and *traditional* vocational goals at those settings. Older adults participating in service-learning projects might increase their sense of purpose, develop critical inquiry skills, augment vocational options, and help the community, especially by means of reflective processes.

In a democracy, according to Dewey, schools must act to ensure that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, to come into contact with a broader environment, and to be freed from the effects of economic inequalities. These schools must also:

provide an environment in which individuals may share in determining and achieving their common purposes in learning so that in contact with each other the students may recognize their common humanity. (Soltis, 2002, p. 581)

Wherever these places of *schooling* take place, students and teachers can choose opportunities for fulfillment. Self-fulfillment can be a personal goal of the lifelong-learning process or it can be the goal of each individual program. Either way, the role of the teacher in facilitating this process cannot be ignored, but neither can the role of the participants in determining their self-fulfillment. Pincas (2007) describes teacher's need to be aware of conditions for learning, relationships between learners and teachers, the learners prior knowledge and competencies, influence of organizational and social

consequences, need for continuing participation, political attitudes, and ideas about competence and capability of older adults. Programs for older learners have proliferated in the United States, and Wolf (2009) noticed that in the last 20 years older people initiated this trend towards more learning, and mostly of the non-formal type. He cites many factors contributing to this trend - people are living longer lives, with improved health and economic status, better prior education, and greater opportunities, along with the popularity of lifelong learning theories and practices that advance the benefits of learning to mind and body.

### **Second Growth in Older Individuals.**

Sadler (2006) writes that growth in older age, what he calls Second Growth, is different from growth in earlier stages since it is a nonlinear and paradoxical. He identified six principles based on over 20 years of longitudinal research, including reflection and risk-taking, realistic optimism, building a positive *Third Age* identity, redefining/balancing work and playing, expanding freedom and deepening intimacy, and enlarging capacity to care. In the risk of reflection, older adults must ask themselves questions related to the direction they want their lives to take. In so doing, they are becoming more mindfully reflective, open to taking those risks, and experimenting with/taking on new challenges. In realistic optimism, despite experiencing life's ups and downs, older people are aware of realistic perceptions of their lives and yet remain optimistic in their attitudes. In building a positive *Third Age* identity, older people are reshaping roles at various institutions, including work, family and community.



By building a *post-institutional* identity, Sadler (2006) identified that older people are in the course of refining themselves and their success by focusing on the process of becoming a whole person. In redefining/balancing work and play, work becomes more important but work is redefined. At the same time *play* becomes more important, illustrating this paradox and allowing more time for play and infusing play into new definitions of work. In expanding freedom and deepening intimacy, older people are using their new found freedom to connect more deeply with others. In enlarging the capacity to care, Sadler (2006) found that all the people in his research sampling are in the process of becoming more caring while paradoxically they also are learning to develop skills of self-care. Sadler (2006) claims that these six principles “constitute a heuristically valuable strategy for enhancing personal skills in the creative process of second growth and a new Third Age” (pp. 13-14). All of these begin with considerable mindful reflection in designing a *Third Age* portfolio which might include redefined work, redefined play, family relationships, friends, service, self-care, and learning (p. 17).

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (Foster-Bey, Grimm, & Dietz, 2007), 77 million American born between 1946 and 1964 –the Baby Boomers – represent a potential boon to the volunteer world since they have higher volunteer rates and different volunteer interest than those in past generations. They found that volunteer retention is related to the type and nature of volunteer activity. The most popular volunteer venue was religious organizations, followed civic, political, professional, or international (in 1989), and educational or youth focused (2003-2005)

settings. They interpreted this to generational differences, even within the Baby Boom demographic. However, it was also discovered that the higher the education level, the greater the propensity to volunteer. These findings also indicated that busy volunteers, those who appear to be the mostly highly attached to their volunteer work, were more likely to be retained as volunteers than episodic or occasional volunteers. In addition, certain activities demonstrate higher volunteer retention, such as professional or management activities as opposed to general labor or providing transportation which had the lowest retention rate.

Their research also discovered that retention rates differ according to who does the asking. Being asked by someone in the volunteer organization had the highest retention rate and being asked by a boss had the lowest retention rate. Interestingly, about 30 percent of all Baby Boomers who chose to volunteer in one year decided not to volunteer in the next year, impacting retention. Engagement increased retention. Their research also showed which types of organizations and activities have higher retention. These include religious organizations and performing professional or management tasks and volunteer retention was also higher for volunteers recruited directly by a nonprofit or community-based organization (pp. 1-15). This points to the value of relationships and one of the hallmarks of service-learning is its partnerships. However, relationships and partnerships are not without their problems.

### **Partnerships and Power Dynamics.**

Every institution embodies its own form of perceived and enacted power (Freire, 2001; Foucault, 1975; Giroux, 2010; Greene, 1988; Apple, 1995; Hytten & Warren,

2003). Since service-learning is based on a partnership model, these partnerships have the potential of unequal power dynamics. Just as in personal relationships there are many types of partnerships in service-learning model which can affect relationships and resources in the community. Do the service and /or the learning improve with the quality of the partnership? Many researchers concur that self-aware collaborations are one of the keys to the success in service-learning. For instance, Kelshaw, Lazarus and Minier (2009) report that genuine democratic partnerships are beneficial to partnering institutions, building strong collaborative relationships composed of interpersonal relationships based on trust and mutual respect. However, deep personal relationships take time to develop and regular attention to maintain (p. 28 - 29). Kaye (2010) comments that collaboration can be the lifeblood of service-learning (p. 30). This philosophical assumption of partnership, begs the questions of reciprocity, power, mutuality, caring, advocacy and action.

Knowledge is viewed as being constructed by particular interests and maintained through relationships of power. This requires an open discussion of the relationship in the decision-making roles of all parties. Partnerships that develop out of institutional interests are inherently problematic (Kelshaw, Lazarus, & Minier, 2009, p. 66). Analysis, critique, and praxis reminds us that service-learning practitioners should prepare their students in advance and create open spaces for critical reflective dialogue within populations, classrooms, and internally with the self, highlighting and minimizing the possibility of power abuses in the service-learning setting, and reducing perceptions of superiority from the viewpoint of the students. Jay (2008), reminds practitioners that

“working across borders of difference to address common social justice issues helps students create constructive alliances for social change, often overcoming initial attitudes of superiority, fear and prejudice” (Jay, 2008, p. 264) and, I add, power. These potential unequal power dynamics between the service-learning students and their partnering community organizations can be addressed and unpacked as part of the service-learning process, and so can the power dynamic between teacher and student be addressed in the same open fashion. Darder (2002) warns that:

mainstream beliefs, attitudes, and values are deeply anchored within dominant cultural and class expectations – expectations defined by the interests of the economically and politically powerful and carried out by the county’s most inconspicuous moral leaders – namely, teachers. (p. 5)

Service-learning teachers, students, and community organizations need to be aware of hegemonic favoritisms and practices. Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum (Purpel, 1989; Giroux, 1983; Greene, 1981; Anyon, 1980; Apple, 1995) is part of the service-learning process.

From that viewpoint, service-learning classrooms, whatever the configuration of the classroom setting, could be defined as collectives, individuals connected by responsibilities and obligations to the whole. hooks (1994) adds that if she does not want to see students use the *authority of experience* as a means of asserting voice, she can:

circumvent this possible misuse of power by bringing to the classroom pedagogical strategies that affirm their presence, their right to speak, in multiple ways on diverse topics. This pedagogical strategy is rooted in the assumption that we all bring to the classroom experiential knowledge, that this knowledge can indeed enhance our learning experience. If experience is already invoked in the classroom as a way of knowing that co-exist in a nonhierarchical way with other

ways of knowing, then it lessens the possibility that it can be used to silence. (p. 84)

The same could be true of organizations and communities. Noblit (2003) sees power in the service of community- community of place, people, purpose, and curriculum (p. 34). He writes that this power of caring is based on connection, relational and reciprocal connections, as well as on construction in three arenas: (1) as *conceived*, (the trait of an individual), (2) as a relationship between people, and (3) as institutionalized (p. 26). Viewing this power as ethical and as moral authority /service to others, he believes that we must address power in the classroom, in groups and in society (p. 27). Eisler (1988, 2007) related tales of partnership societies where cooperation and caring were venerated by society. She continues to envision and work towards a *caring economy* that is based on these principles.

Service-learning, done with sensitivity and critical thinking, dialogue, and reflection, can transform stereotypes, shatter hegemonic beliefs, and change privileged actions. Foucault (1975) writes about exercising power, yet many individuals do not realize their power and privilege (A. Johnson, 2006; Schwalbe, 2005; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Thompson, 2003). The tactics and strategies of power and *mechanisms of oppression* that Foucault (1975) points out are important to the discussion of Service-Learning. Many people are not aware of these asymmetrical power systems at play during the Service-Learning process. Purpel (1989) cautions that “as educators we must also confront ourselves as both oppressor and oppressed” (p. 63). Service-learning educators and practitioners meet many (usually White, middle-class, and privileged)

well-meaning, yet unaware or uninformed, service-learning students who benevolently *help* by squelching and silencing the voices of the perceived *powerless*. The humanity of the powerless group often gets erased, and a whole group of people as internally diverse as any other gets reduced to a stereotype (Schwalbe, 2005, p. 31).

One way to change this power dynamic, is through the act of active listening. West (2004) laments that the national focus has become some dominated by narrow us-versus-them discourse which drowns out authentic debate over issues (p. 65). Actively listening defies generalizations and stereotypes (Noblit, 2003; Howard, 1999; Jay, 2008, T. Johnson, 2006) and can be seen as an act of defiance (hooks, 1994). Whether encountered face to face or encountered through texts, active-listening and reflection are starting points for seeing humanity as opposed to seeing otherness (Russell, 1998, Brock, 2005).

### **Reflection and Critical Reflection.**

Service-learning programs combine the reflective processing aspect for learning to be fully realized. The concept of reflection is at the core of answering the questions of how we process everyday life experience (Kang, 2007, p. 208), but not all reflection is critical reflection and this is what separates service-learning from volunteerism. Kristof (2010) underscores that although experiential education and service-learning are hot trends in education today, one should not assume that providing a student an experience means a positive lesson learned that reveals the best of humanity (Kristof, 2010, p. 1). According to Kaye (2010) reflection occurs both through activities structured by the teacher and spontaneously during all stages of the service-learning process. Reflection

can occur during investigation, during preparation and planning, during action, and following service activities (pp. 38-40).

In Dewey's (1998) *How We Think*, there is a restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process. In the foreword, Greene writes that:

the ground is experience in its concreteness and diversity; and experience also signifies active doing and undoing, ongoing transactions between a living organism and the environment. (p. xiii)

For Dewey, according to Kadlec (2007), knowledge is something active rather than passive and it is *social* and *communicative* rather than proscribed (p. 19), making knowledge a process of co-creation through lived experience in our interactions with each other. I believe that reflection accelerates this process.

The reflective portion is one of the hallmarks of service-learning. Reflection, especially critical reflection, has the potential of affecting all aspects of one's life. What exactly is reflection and how is it similar to or different from critical reflection? Kath Fisher (2012) has researched this topic of reflection and developed a handout that explains the differences. First of all it is important to note that critical reflection is not the same as negative criticism. According to Fisher's research, "the root of the word 'reflection' is the Latin *reflectere*. *Flectere* means *to bend*, so *re-flectere* increases the inflection – '*to bend back*', or to bend again or double-take. The meaning of the word has come to be interpreted as an introspective 'bending in', i.e. a reviewing of our own inner process of thinking and feeling (from Bleakley, 1999)" (p. 1). Fisher (2012) points out that Dewey is considered a key originator of thinking about reflection and that he

thought of it as a “special form of problem solving, thinking to resolve an issue which involved active chaining, a careful ordering of ideas linking each with its predecessors (Hatton & Smith, 1995, p. 33)” (p. 1).

Fisher (2012) explains the concepts of reflection by reviewing three types of reflection – technical, practical, and critical (see Appendix B). *Technical reflection* is about effective and efficient application of reflection for skills achievement and controlling the environment. It focuses on knowledge that is value-free and objective, by asking, “Have I achieved my goals in the best way possible?” *Practical reflection* is about examining goals and assumptions that create socially constructed and normed meanings by use of shared language and communication, and asks, “What are the implications of my actions?” *Critical reflection* is about the ethical and moral values constructed by:

locating analysis of personal action within wider historical, political, and social contexts. Knowledge is viewed as being constructed by particular interests and maintained through relationships of power. (p. 2)

It looks at how actions reflect one’s values and beliefs and how they reflect relationships of power. For Fisher (2012), critical reflection is a process that views one’s positionality, requiring a level of self-awareness, and is generally more difficult because of the unquestioning acceptance of many unconsciously-held beliefs and assumptions, particularly those that are supported by our social institutions and structures. This is different from critical thinking and critical analysis which involve the processes of



abstract reasoning, detecting the assumptions underlying *another's* position or text and identifying how such assumptions serve particular interests (Fisher, 2012, p. 3).

Cipolle (2010) acknowledges that this critical self-reflection helps students learn about themselves. Since families, individuals, groups, and society influence their identity formation (p. 34), this critical self-reflection removes teachers from the center of knowledge and provides students with the opportunity to grapple with issues themselves (p. 97). Critical self-reflection is also an ongoing process for educator-researchers (Brighton & Moon, 2007, p. 27) such as this researcher.

### **Disciplinary Fragmentation and Lack of Diversity.**

Another research concern confronting the service-learning movement is that the practice and research on service-learning is often fragmented and/ or applied to only specific populations. For example, researchers or practitioners might only focus on middle school science students, native populations, college students, or at-risk kids. In talking about helping out Haiti during one its recent disasters, Mack and Ojalvo (2010) commented that “the teach-in could be assigned in one subject area, be explored as an interdisciplinary unit or serve as a service-learning project implemented by a homeroom, team or advisory” (p. 1). Purpel (1989) explains that the strict separation of courses and subjects “not only is of the dubious nature intellectually but tends to perpetuate the myth of hard and fast intellectual compartments” (p. 55-56). The issue of fragmentation might not be an issue at all, or it might be one of the biggest issues of the service-learning movement. Service-learning can work within and between populations, including a wide age range of participants, as well as intergenerational opportunities (Hegeman, Roodin,

Gilliland, & O'Flathabhain, 2010; Krout, Bergman, Bianconi, Caldwell, Dorsey, Durnford, Erickson, Lapp, Monroe, Pogorzala, & Taves, 2010). However, intergenerational service-learning is often a misnomer. For instance, Horowitz, Wong, and Dechello (2010) explored intergenerational service-learning yet the focus of their study remained on the service of the students and the (health education/ balance) learning of the seniors. Since research on service-learning shows it is mostly directed to youth under the age of 21, the absence of research about service-learning with older adults is truly an intergenerational problem.

Strom (2009) feels it is important to the service-learning teacher to expose students to a broader world (p. 1), such as youth to older adults. Being with different and diverse populations might assist one in growing as a person, and might also assist with development and utilization of critical thinking skills, fostering individual and collective sense of purpose, and enhancing interaction and interdependence within the community, including increased civility, civic engagement (Freedland & Lieberman, 2010), and social justice (Blundo, 2010; Cipolle, 2010). Unfortunately, diversity has not always been on the top of priorities in service-learning. As mentioned previously, service-learning has been enacted mostly with high school and college students, a majority of them white and middle class, *serving* as hosts of *less fortunate* people, who are usually people of color. This paradigm can keep hegemonic structures in place in reinforcing the status quo. Diverse populations who participate as service-learners, not just as recipients of this paradigm, are needed to break these hegemonic thoughts and actions.

Broadened service-learning paradigms are not the only diversity needed in service-learning. Diverse methodological and research models can broaden program and curricular perspectives as well. In general, qualitative research has been seen as of lower quality or value, yet qualitative measures are one of the primary ways of researching service-learning. Furco and Root (2010) has been one of the main proponents of welcoming mixed methodologies in service-learning research. This will be further explained in the methodology chapter. Diversity not only broadens viewpoints but helps discover new, and sometimes conflicting, approaches to theory and practice. According to Naples (2003), feminist praxis offers both a critique as well as an embracing of service-learning that help frame and support the need for welcoming and combining diverse ways of knowing and doing. She asserts that the specific methods we choose and how we employ those methods profoundly shaped by our epistemological stance (p. 3). I think my research findings will suggest that many of the epistemological foundations, theories, practices, and methods of various movements, such as feminism and andragogy, were already in place in Jewish educational milieu, but misplaced or devalued by society. The ideas raised by all these, and other, epistemological and ontological factors will re-surface in the Jewish epistemology section which will also help frame and support the *Project*.

### **Social Justice and Moral Development.**

Cipolle's (2010) research found common experiences of adults committed to social justice including family, educational environments, and common service experiences. This research showed that those committed to social justice grew up in

families that instilled these values and modeled service, that felt differently than their peers, and that had a broader and more inclusive definition of family. The educational environment of these socially conscious people shows that these values were also in their schools, providing opportunities for exploration and discussion of their beliefs and obligations to others. These schools were committed to service and social justice, and provided a mentoring environment. Regarding common service experience, research showed that these people had extensive service experience in multiple sites, took on leadership roles in designing and implementing service projects, worked directly with people from different backgrounds, enjoyed service and participated in service with their friends, worked alongside adults committed to social justice, and many also had service experiences abroad (p. 28). This research points towards the learning of social justice, and the *Project* will utilize common service experiences, educational environments, and a classroom type of family structure to attempt to discuss and inculcate social justice values.

According to Smith (2008, p.9), there is evidence that service-learning programs can have positive effects on students' moral reasoning skills, and ethics (Furco & Billig, 2002). Service-learning is sometimes expressed as a moral imperative, a way to transform the world for the better, to connect and level humanity. Call it social reform, social justice, social transformation or a myriad other labels -the hopeful outcome remains. According to Fishman & McCarthy (2007), for this hope in achieving social reform, Dewey favored using *human intelligence*, and the people's ability to adjust practices to changing conditions, while Freire advocated *conscientizacao*, the ability to

join with others to rename and transform themselves and the world (pp. 55-56). Dewey felt “that ‘growth itself is the moral end’ and that to ‘protect, sustaining, and direct growth is the chief *ideal* of education’” (Rorty, 1999, p. 120) and to be part of the democratically lived experience fosters growth. In his book, *Moral Outrage in Education*, Purpel (1989), explored the moral imperative of teaching and learning, and contended that moral development is a missing part of education. Purpel outlined ways to increase moral development via a holistic, humanistic, critical, moral, consciousness raising and service-learning approach to views of social influences and social problems. Purpel (1989) expresses the term *moral* as focusing on “principles, rules, and ideas that are related to human relationships, to how we deal with each other and with the world” (p. 66). Adult educators who use service-learning should not only study if service-learning experiences foster an ethic of caring, but how service-learning modalities contributes to younger, middle age, and older adult students desires, goals, and accomplishments (Smith, 2008, pp.12-13) in this area.

### **Jewish Service-Learning**

Within Jewish communities, secular and national service-learning models are utilized almost exclusively in Jewish teen programs, to the exclusion of adult Jewish education. Emphasis in these Jewish service-learning programs focuses on the impact of service on community, personal development, content knowledge and Jewish knowledge in almost equal measure, holding “particular potential for young people when they are in a critical transition from late adolescence to early adulthood” (Irie & Blair, 2008, p. 2).

Even the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA) report *Making Jewish Education Work: Jewish Service Learning* (2011) noted that “Jewish Service Learning opportunities are designed to engage young Jews in social and communal issues, while nurturing their Jewish identities, sensibilities, and knowledge base” (p. iv). JESNA’s Berman Center, through its Learning and Consultation Center, evaluated 11 Jewish service-learning programs. In answering who participates in Jewish service-learning, the conclusions of the JESNA report revealed that more than eight thousand students participant in single-day events each year and an additional 3,500 participate in immersive Jewish service-learning programs annually. Participants are usually between the ages of 11 and 19 with most participants being 15 and 16 year olds. A small cohort is older than 19 (p. 4). This completes the identification of one problem of Jewish service-learning – where are the adults, and especially the *mature* adults, in Jewish service-learning?

Irie & Blair (2008) scanned the Jewish service-learning landscape and identified 25 Jewish service-learning programs operated by 15 organizations and administered online surveys to these organizations. Much of the information is self-reported and therefore represents the perspectives of the individuals interviewed (p. 5). Irie & Blair (2008) define *Jewish Service-Learning* as combining “direct service that responds to real community needs with structured learning and time for reflection, of which are placed in a rich context of Jewish education and values” (p. 2).

They discovered that few university age Jews participate in Jewish service-learning, that potential demand for Jewish service-learning outpaces current participation

(more applicants than program slots and an untapped market), that short-term alternative break experiences dominate (and most are operated by Jewish organizations that include additional programming), that equal numbers of university-age Jewish young adults serve in the United States and abroad, and that Jewish service-learning programs intend to influence young people's Jewish learning and identity and provide authentic service, with other intended impacts varying by program model. It is interesting to note that participants spent the majority of their time on doing direct service work (60%) and almost a quarter of the time (21%), on average, of their time on knowledge acquisition, skill development, and reflection. The study also showed that program partnerships are central to participants' recruitment and providing authentic service (pp. 4-12).

The Journal of Jewish Communal Service (JCSA), along with the organization *Repair the World* (RTW) collaborated in 2012 to produce a special journal edition devoted to Jewish service-learning pertinently titled *People of the Book, Community of Action: Exploring Jewish Service-Learning* with only one article addressing older service-learning populations. In their article titled (and questioned) appropriately *Service-Learning and Jewish Baby Boomers: An emerging opportunity or a best missed chance?*, Elcott and Himmelfarb (2012) write that "if we are concerned about capturing an emerging growth curve for service-learning, ignoring Jewish Boomers would be a huge missed opportunity for the Jewish Community indeed" (p. 199-200). The authors continue that if these Jewish boomers are not engaged they will find meaning, engagement, and affiliations elsewhere. Otherwise, they warn, "service (with or without

learning components) becomes a youth activity to be left behind as one matures” (p. 205).

I sincerely hope this will not be the case.

The current state of Jewish service-learning is that it is an emergent (new) practice, trying to create points of connections between programs, lacking strong and independent leadership, infrastructure, and consistent message of the overall value of these programs and what they can accomplish, it is not yet a cohesive field or *community of practice*, but there is interest among Jewish donors and funding institutions.

Regarding the impact of Jewish service-learning, there are limited data on Jewish service-learning outcomes but these limited studies do suggest that these programs have a positive effect on Jewish identity formation and social capital creation, that positive secular service program outcomes predict favorable for Jewish service-learning, and that impacts vary according to the term and nature of the service. They explain that the longer one is involved in service-learning, the better the outcomes (pp. 12-18).

Regarding the quality and capacity of what exists in Jewish service-learning, Irie & Blair (2008) state that there are limits to the current Jewish service-learning program capacity including defining a market niche for programs, securing adequate financial support, hiring and developing staff, better understanding the nature and level of demand, recruitment, sharing knowledge to increase efficiency and effectiveness, establishing and strengthening relationships with partners for program delivery, scaling program models, and building internal organizational capacity. This implies that current program personnel and educators want their programs to grow responsibly. Programs cite participant’s fees as a significant deterrent for prospective participants. Programs aspire



to create lasting ties with alumni since long-term participants are more likely to be active alumni (pp. 19-21).

### **Program Quality and Standards.**

Research by Irie & Blair (2008) identified another major issue in Jewish service-learning - program quality which is mixed and in need of uniform standards. The research found eight indicators of quality, which are process (not outcome) oriented. These include service work that meets a community need and is also meaningful to the participant, participant education about the root causes of the problems the service is addressing, having adequate time to reflect on and discuss their service and its impact, and having effective partnerships with the communities in which they are working. These programs strive to find motivated participants who join the program with a desire to serve, not simply to socialize, and participants who have a strong Jewish context for the work including structured Jewish learning. Additionally, the quality of a program also rests on finding experienced educators, and post-service follow-up and activities that provide participants with continuity related to their service (Irie & Blair, 2008, pp. 21-22).

Although there are no universally accepted standards of quality for Jewish service-learning programs, some of the goals of these programs include: deepening the commitment to the Judaic imperative for civic and social responsibility and to the Jewish communities' role in American public life and in world affairs; providing a greater appreciation for the enduring wisdom of Jewish texts and values through the examination of their relevance to a variety of social and political issues; stimulating leadership,

activism, and advocacy on social issues that challenge our communities, our nation, and the world so that program alumni can become agents for positive change in society; fostering a heightened sense of civic awareness and responsibility among students; furthering their commitment to fully participate in the American public arena and in the institutions that work on behalf of the Jewish people and the state of Israel; and helping them see this commitment as a natural outgrowth of their Jewish learning (JESNA, 2011, p. 3).

The Jewish service organization *Repair the World* has come up with some standards for immersive Jewish service-learning programs. These include *authentic service* – participants engage in service that addresses genuine and unmet community needs; *program design* – a program that is intentionally designed to achieve well-articulated outcomes for participants and service recipients; *integrated Jewish learning, contextual learning and reflection* – a program has an educational framework that includes activities that (1) root the service that takes place during the program in Jewish learning and (2) deepens participants’ understanding about the social, economic and historical contexts in which the service occurs; *diversity* – the program strives to promote understanding of diversity and mutual respect among and between participants and community members; *progress monitoring* – the program assesses the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting goals and uses results for improvement and sustainability; *recruitment, orientation and reorientation*; and *facilitator training* – educators/program leaders had adequate training to succeed in their roles (JESNA, 2011, appendix pp. 7-8).

Although these standards of practice were implemented with teenagers in mind, these standards will be reviewed and implemented into the *Project* as able. The *Project* is not considered immersive, or intermittent, and is much more than a single day of service-learning. It is designed to be a continual, continuous, regularly scheduled event that builds on itself. While many Jewish service-learning programs have conducted formal program of evaluations, few, if any, have undertaken ongoing longitudinal studies to assess their longer-term impact on participants and/or the communities they serve (JESNA, 2011, p.5).

The Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies (AJFCA), conducted a survey in 2008 of Jewish Family Services (JFS), Federations, JCCs, JCRC's and religious institutions to discover how the Jewish community was engaging Baby Boomers. They recognize that:

Jewish Family Services have a unique opportunity to expand their services by harnessing the knowledge, experience, and financial resources of thousands of Jewish Baby Boomers, individuals in their 50's and 60's, who will retire and seek new avenues of engagement in the coming decades. (p. 1)

What the research showed via questionnaires, interviews, and academic and philanthropic literature is that most of the Jewish organizations contacted do not have major initiatives in place to engage Baby Boomers and that most of the creative models identified are housed in or originated in Jewish Family Services agencies. Although the AJFCA survey and its conclusions did not specifically list *Mature Adult Service-Learning* as one of its options, it did suggest more engagement of Baby Boomers within the Jewish community, concluding that "a key factor will be in redefining tasks and processes to allow for a

different and more targeted, time-defined method of engagement which utilizes skills and passions brought to the table by Baby Boomers” (AJFCA, 2008, p. 18).

Therefore, the *Project* will be housed in a faith-based, non-profit, social-service agency (hereafter referred to as *The Agency*) - a place where all these factors can come together and where creativity can thrive in creating these programs to fulfill the needs of our constituents. The question, according to Irie and Blair (2008) is “whether the Jewish community will fully seize the opportunity to develop the potential that Jewish Service learning holds” (p. 39). I ask whether the Jewish and secular community will fully seize the opportunity to develop the potential that the *Project* holds!

### **Summary**

In summary, the review of literature discovered many perspectives focused on adult education, lifelong learning, and service-learning from both secular and Jewish viewpoints. Knowles (1990) noted that all the great teachers of ancient time from Confucius to the Hebrew prophets to Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato, to Cicero were teachers of adults, not of children (p. 27). Given the tradition around, importance of, and research on educating adults and adult learning, I propose that adults could benefit from expanded learning and service environments and opportunities. Many authors claim that one of the most effective ways to learn is by *doing* (Lawrence & Butler, 2010); therefore service-learning modalities could have an even greater impact on learning than just traditional or formal methods.

Mature learners seek education and knowledge for myriad reasons as diverse and different as the learners themselves. For most, however, our present ways of structuring

educational institutions (some which have not changed for centuries) have constricted the options and opportunities for these *non-traditional* learners. Because of their backgrounds and life experiences, mature learners possess knowledge which has been constructed in ways not easily recognized by *traditional* institutions or traditional research. Mature learners often seek learning for goals far greater than job preparedness, including personal development and self-fulfillment. But even then, when returning to school in order to retool after a job loss, or for personal growth, many mature learners find little spiritual or personal fulfillment in repeating the structured classroom days of their lost youth. But, with a new postmodern curriculum of service-learning, the past-present-future can be transformed for these adult service learners, as they transform themselves into *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learners*. There is also recognition there is more to education of a student than merely classroom time (hooks, 1994, p. 163).

The literature and perspective review shows that there is much interest in service-learning but that that interest is relegated to pockets of certain populations and groups. Older persons want to be active service-learners, not just recipients of the service in service-learning. There is an absence of literature and research on lifelong service-learning since a majority of service-learning is geared toward teens, especially those in late high school and early college. Service-learning is not interconnected, integrated, or immersed. It is also not utilized across populations, across communities, or across ages, as this study suggests. Interdisciplinary use of service-learning is spotty, and non-traditional settings for service-learning were barely mentioned. The enormous lack of

scholarly research and articles on mature adult service-learning as well as on Jewish service-learning is one of the reasons for combining and researching these topics. In addition, I contacted many of the Jewish service-learning programs in existence to see if any of them are involving older adults in their practices or studies – they are not! I also contacted a majority of the Jewish organizations listed in the AJFCA (2008) report to see if they were *engaging* mature adults in service-learning opportunities – they are not! This is why I feel it is important to create a model for, and to study the potential of, Jewish MATURE adult service-learning.

The next chapter focuses on Jewish perspectives that may be of benefit to educational configurations, especially to experiential and service-learning prototypes. Since service-learning has a history of approximately a hundred years, it might value and consider including the action-oriented and social justice epistemology of Judaism that is four thousand years in the making.

### CHAPTER III

#### JEWISH EPISTEMOLOGY – JEWISH WAYS OF KNOWING

The Rabbi of Rizhyn said: “This is the service man must perform all of his days: to shape matter into form, to refine the flesh, and to let the light penetrate the darkness until the darkness itself shines and there is no longer any division between the two. As it is written: ‘And there was evening and there was morning - one day.’” (Buber, 1948/1969, p. 59)

In this chapter we explore Jewish epistemology and ways of knowing via *experience first* activities. This is a reversal of traditional Western epistemologies which focus on cognitive *thought first* knowledge acquisition. We learn in the Bible that the Israelites standing at Mt. Sinai *did and then heard* (Exodus 24:7). This conversion of the more usually understood relationship between understanding and practice is no accident. The concept of *experience first* informs Jewish approaches to knowing and presents implications for education in contemporary culture. In this chapter are words and concepts that might be foreign to the reader; however, by the end of this chapter it will become clear that these Jewish ways of knowing are social action-oriented, and social justice-oriented. The enactment of these concepts has the potential to benefit the larger society as a whole and education, especially service-learning, in particular. This chapter highlights the benefit of these particular *ways of knowing* to modern society and education for connection to the overarching framework of the *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning Project*.

Many of the words in this chapter are written in transliteration style – Hebrew pronunciation written in English letters. However, some letters do not correspond with any English letter. For instance, you will see an “H” that is underlined looking like “H” or the combination of “kh” both of which are transliterations of Hebrew letters that produce a guttural sound similar to the clearing of one’s throat. Paired with the Hebrew letters and words are translations or corresponding English letters for the sounds produced. However, I retain in quotes the original spelling and punctuation used by the various authors cited. All other translations from Hebrew to English, as well as the transliterations of concepts, are my personal interpretations and composites, gleaned from Jewish resources (especially the Jewish Publication Society), academic sources, family and friends, colleagues, clergy, and other readings and interpretations. These transliterated words will be presented in *italics*. As an example, there is a central concept in Judaism, known as *Halakha*. The root of this word derives from the letters that sound similar to H-L-KH and can be translated as *walk, go, the way, or path*. In this chapter, the metaphor of the *journey* is a means of unlocking and presenting Jewish values and ways of knowing.

### **Doing**

For Judaism, its ontology (the way of being - Jewish) and its pedagogy/andragogy (the art and profession of teaching and learning - Judaism) are one and the same. At Mount Sinai, at the giving of the Torah, in that metaphorically and historically physical and spiritual gathering, the Israelite people agreed to *do* before they ever heard the words of *what* and *how* they were to *do it*. This verse is called *Na’aseh v’nishma* - נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע -



which is found in the Bible, *Exodus 24:7*, and translates as *All that the Lord has spoken will we do and we will hear [obey/understand]*. This is one of the few times that the entire Jewish nation did not question, individually or collectively! Being known as a *stiff-necked* and stubborn people, this unity of purpose in action was quite amazing; and *experience first* has been the symbolic way of knowing ever since.

Plaskow (1990) states it well when she writes that “to stand on the ground of our experience... to start with the certainty of our membership in our own people is to be forced to re-member and recreate its history, to shape *Torah*” (pp. 27-28). *Torah*, which literally means *instruction*, has the same root (Y-R-H) as the word *morah* which means *teacher*. *Torah* is the instruction manual. We, the Jews, are both the teachers/learners and the manuals onto which the instruction is embedded and imprinted. We are not just the people of the book but also the people of the deed. The *mitzvot* (commandments) outlined in the Torah, speak mostly of *thou shalt do* and *thou shalt not do*. They do not start with *thou shalt think* or *thou shalt believe* or even *though shall feel*. Experience is so important that even *Kabbalah*, Jewish mysticism, is not to be studied until one reaches the age of 40, is married, and *experienced*! Without life experience, the learning gleaned from studying Kabbalah would be meaningless.

It is a *body-mind* process, not the other way around. This juxtaposition of body (doing, experience, action) and mind (thought) are recurrent themes of the Jewish way of knowing. So is the subsequent integration of body, mind, and spirit as reflected through my readings, my teachings, my learnings, and my experiences. It is the notion of the

experiential leading to a cognitive-sensual amalgamation. In this section, I identify these Jewish values and *ways of knowing by doing*, which are many parts to a whole.

### **The Jewish Ways of Knowing**

One of the recognized values in Judaism is the ability to learn throughout one's lifetime. Another recognized value in Judaism is the ability to interpret Biblical texts through contemporary as well as historical prisms. These prisms unite the needs of the collective and individual perspectives with traditional as well as new meanings. Berlin & Brettler (of the Jewish Publication Society, 2004) write that:

The tradition of Biblical interpretation has been a constant conversation, at times an argument, among its participants; at no period has the text been interpreted in a monolithic fashion. If anything marks Jewish biblical interpretation it is the diversity of approaches employed and the multiplicity of meanings produced. (p. ix)

In addition they add that just as there is no one Jewish interpretation, “there is no authorized Jewish translation of the Bible into English” (p. x). Such is why “each generation must, as it were, stand again at Sinai finding new layers of significant and understanding in the text” (Shapiro, 1999, p. 13). With this in mind, these interpretations of the ways of knowing are based on my present level of understanding from my readings, reflections, and research. It was difficult categorizing all these strategies, as many of them overlap. It was also difficult to determine any rank order between the concepts.

Therefore, what follows is a listing of some of these social-action and social-justice values and beliefs. They are alphabetized based on the transliteration of Hebrew

word (with English translation of these concepts in parentheses) - *Avodah* (service), *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of G-d), *B'dihut* (humor), *Bikur Holim* (visiting the sick), *Derekh Eretz* (manners), *Gemilut Hasadim* (the giving of loving-kindness), *Hahnasat Orhim* (hospitality), *Havurah* and *Hevruta* (relationships), *Hesed* (loving-kindness), *Herut* and *Hofesh* (liberation & freedom), *Hitpal'ut* (wonder and surprise), *K'hilah* (community), *Shabbat* and *Menuha* (Sabbath, rest and reflection), *Minhag/Masoret* (tradition), *Mishpatim* (rules / obligations), *Mitzvot* and *Dibrot* (commandments, responsibilities), *Moda'ut* (mindfulness), *Rahamim / Rahmanut* (compassion), *Refu'ah* (healing), *She'elah Bekortit* (critical questioning), *Shema* (hearing/active listening), *Shamot* (naming/ labeling), *She'lemot* (wholeness/ peace), *Simha* (joy), *Shinui* (Transformation), *Teshuvah* (re-turning/repentance), *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world and activism), *Tikvah* (hope), *Todah/ Todot / Hakarat HaTov* (thanks/ gratitude/ being grateful), *Tzedakah* (justice/charity), *Tz'hok* (laughter), *Yisra'el* (struggling, questioning, wrestling, and exploring different perspectives), *Zay'hut Atz'mit* (self-reflection and identity), and *Zikaron* (collective memory). These enacted concepts are explained further in detail later in this chapter - along with their active contributions to the learning process.

Judaism is about *doing*. Many of these pathways revolve around experience and the (social) action needed to construct a better world. These actions and their service to humanity are seen as an opportunity to partner with God and to co-create together - not as a subjugation, self-sacrifice, or submission - but as an empowerment. This comprehensive explanation of how these ways of knowing might inform and transform

traditional American education could be titled “the Jewish way of *doing knowing*” or “the Jewish way of *knowing doing*.” In this form of embodied understanding and awareness, kinesthetic learning is beyond experiential learning. It is service-learning - in the *doing* of service and *doing* learning is the *knowing*.

### **Connections to Service-Learning**

These pathways are conduits for progressive service-learning theory and practice in many ways. Service-learning engages students in “community service activities of intentional academic and learning goals and opportunities for reflection that connect to the academic disciplines” (Cress, Collier, & Reitenauer, 2005, p. 7). The concept of *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God) shows service-learners that there is value to every human being. *Zikaron* (memory) reminds us of this. The commandments of *Tzedakah* (justice/charity) and *Hesed* (loving kindness) ensure the loving and just ways we are to act, and to remember to act, towards all humanity. *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) is related to, and footpaths from, justice and loving kindness, which are practices of community service. *K'hilah* (community) is the starting and ending point of *Tikkun Olam*, manifested in community activism. *Menuha* (rest and reflection) and *Sinuii* (Transformation) form from the narratives of community. *Yisra'el* (struggle) occurs from the multiple and competing meanings within narratives and lived experiences, begging us to *She'elah Bekortit* (critically question everything). All these inform our choices in action. *Herut* (liberation) springs from choice, always choosing to retain *Simha* (joy), *B'dihut* (humor), *Tz'hok*, (Laughter) and *Tikvah* (hope) through the process.

## The Talmud Pages

In this chapter, I highlight some of these values by presenting each approach on its own page, fashioned as a page in the *Talmud*. The word *Talmud*, which also means *instruction* or *learning*, has the same root (L-M-D) as the words *teach* and *study*. The *Talmud*, written between the second and fifth centuries C.E., could be termed a post-modern hermeneutic (the study of the theory and practice of interpretation).

Although the *Talmud* did not include the voices of women and other surrounding cultures, it displays a remarkable view of Jewish philosophy, laws, ethics, history, customs, and traditions. Each page is laid out with the core text from the oral and written traditions - *Mishnah*, *Gemara*, and *Torah* - in the middle of the page surrounded by discussions, interpretations, and commentaries from various rabbinical scholars. Even dissenting voices and opinions are captured within the text and are consciously included. The use of examination, argumentation, and disputation is extraordinary. Waskow (1988) explains that “we need to recover the creativity, the radical and the conservative creativity, that the rabbis of the *Talmud* drew on” (p. 176), and that we need to “uncover, revise, and discover aspects of Torah that have been hidden from us” (p. 179). It is my intent to do so.

For this chapter, my *Talmud pages* are structured so that core concepts, metaphors, and perspectives are in the middle of the page, along with quotes from the Bible or *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of our Ancestors*). At the heart of the page, in a box, is the emphasized concept, with the Hebrew word for that concept, along with a postmodern perspective, a metaphor for this concept, and text from the Bible (mostly) or from a major

Jewish text, which embodies that particular concept. Postmodern approaches claim that knowledge and consciousness are socially-constructed, and that power plays an important part in shaping that consciousness, making it difficult to measure. Postmodern perspectives also focus on empathetic understanding, the inability to separate the knower from the known, and multiple webs of realities. This postmodern perspective is needed to include all voices in the discussion, many of whom have been silenced or discounted.

That is why around the box, on each page in two columns, are elucidations of various writers' viewpoints, starting with an introduction to the topic and ending with ways in which these Jewish concepts inform service-learning perspectives. For these postmodern pages, I will not be using any *Mishnah* or *Gemara* (which are actually interpretations themselves) or any Rashi or Tosofot (famous medieval Jewish commentators). I will be using the writings, quotes, paraphrases, commentaries, and interpretations of various contemporary scholars, philosophers, authors, and educators, as well as my own analyses of these. From these pages, we can further study the Jewish values and ways of knowing together.

There are references to *God* in this chapter but you do not need to believe in or experience God to understand and appreciate these concepts. I have seen God written as G-d (to not take the name in vain), Adonai (Hebrew for *My Lord*), Higher Power, Nature, Supernatural, The Ineffable (indescribable), Him, Her, Shekhinah (the feminine mystical attributes of God), The Holy One, King, Queen, Ruler of Heavens and Earth, to name a few. I simply chose *God* because there is a universal understanding of the term *God* and because this word takes less space than other expressions used to describe God. Many of

the writers, philosophers, authors, and educators whose ideas and words follow also use the term *God*. Whether you believe that the words and stories of the Bible are divine or humanly/divinely-inspired does not matter. What does matter is what actions and learning take place because of these concepts. What actions and learnings will you take by reading these pages? You are now part of the interpretation. After reading each page, please pause to contemplate or consider how each concept might be implemented or applied into one's thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, and actions.

As Rabbi Hillel answered when asked to explain the *Torah* while standing on one foot, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. The rest is commentary. Now, go and study" (Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a). It is time to take our commentaries and go study. Like the idea of service-learning, Rabbi Hillel invites us to *do* first, then study and reflect. There is a powerful lesson in the teaching, and learning, behaviors and actions which come first. I invite the reader to now join me in acting and in doing, in studying and in learning. Tying it all together, I will show how traditional Jewish narratives, especially the experience at Mount Sinai, can dovetail with contemporary Jewish narratives and enhance education in a post-modern world. In our present American culture that yells, "Think before you act," these Jewish ways of knowing whispers lovingly, "Learn, *bubblah*, from your experience." Enjoy the journey....and your experience.

The concepts of *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God) and *Zikaron* (memory) are intertwined. The experience of the divine spark in every person we encounter, along with remembering and recognizing that spark of their being, and within our own being, keeps us connected. It is the Jewish way of knowing that causes one to view the humanity and the divine of every person simultaneously.

“We are created in the image of God, if you will, and we are obliged to return the favor. God seeks to make us become ever more holy; we seek to make God human. The divine voice deep within each of us and.....calls upon us to reshape our lives as embodiments of divinity. This inner drive to imitate the ever-giving source of life calls forth in us an unceasing flow of love, generosity of spirit, and full acceptance, both of ourselves and of all God’s creatures” (Green, 2006, p. 31).

Shapiro (2006) also reminds us that “our religious traditions, however corrupted they might become by the ‘gospel’ of wealth and status, still remind us of the importance of caring for the least among us, and the need for unconditionally affirming the value of each and every life. They remind us of *B'tselem Elohim* – we are all made in God’s image” (p. 60).

We remember this and are reminded of this important concept in our stories and narratives. “Jewish people today don’t know much about the years their ancestors lived as slaves in Egypt. What they know, instead, is that they *love freedom and hate oppression*. They hate any kind of oppression – they hate it just as much when it happens to other people as when it happens to them. That

strong feeling is an attitude; the seed of it was planted hundreds of years ago in the collective memory and it kept growing” (Cone, 1989, p. 6). Therefore, memory, and the narrative that memories create, can spark compassion and social justice.

With the simple yet profound concept of *B'tzelem Elohim* we are beckoned towards spiritual and profane actions simultaneously. “That every human being is the image of God is Judaism’s most basic moral truth. We need to help all humans to discover this dimension of their own existence in whatever terms they may choose to articulate it...We do not require others to accept the language of Judaism, but

we do see justice, decency, and civility to one another as universal imperatives that stem directly from the reality that we call that *tselem elohim*, the image of God” (Green, 2010, pp. 29-30).

Divine spark, and memory of that divine spark, should join people together,

not separate them. This is a new paradigm (worldview). Therefore, “the new paradigms that originated from the Shoah [the Nazi Holocaust of Jews in WWII] must be sensitive and directed for the creation of a better human and better humanity, towards people and cultures that will never again produce slaughterers like the Nazis” (Burg, 2008, p. 214).

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of *B'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God, informs the practice of service-learning by infusing recognition of the value of each person. We are commanded to look for, experience, and share our common humanity with those we encounter - discovering and uncovering divine sparks along the way.

### *B'tzelem Elohim*

בצלם אלהים

### **In the Image of God**

**Perspectives:** Presence. Mindfulness.  
Humanity. The Value of Every Person.

**Metaphor:** Divine Spark

*“So God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female.”*

- Genesis 1:27



The concepts of *Tzedakah* (justice) and *Hesed* (loving-kindness) are intertwined in community through compassion and the compassionate ways of being, since “compassion is inseparable from real community” (Shapiro, 2006, p. 77). In America, the metaphors for justice are lady justice, scales, law, and of justice being blind; in Judaism, justice is seen in terms of relationships and how to treat people.

“Justice, justice shall you pursue...” (Deuteronomy 16:20) was not just a poetic line to the Jewish people, it was a purpose defined” (Cone, 1989, p. 7). Justice and loving kindness are communal terms. A. Johnson (2006) reminds us that “it is impossible to live in a world that generates so much injustice and suffering without being touched by it” (p. 63).

Eisler (2008) asks “why, when we humans have such a great capacity for caring, consciousness, and creativity, has our world seen so much cruelty, insensitivity, and destructiveness?” (p. 1). Pursuing justice is an action verb, but not the same as pursuing vengeance. Lerner (1994) emphasizes that the Torah asks us to respond to a different kind of voice – “a voice of love, justice, and transcendence” (p. 95).

Lerner challenges us to respond and act to *that* voice! So does service-learning. In the Jewish tradition, helping others is everyone’s obligation. Dorff (2008) adds “from the Jewish perspective doing justice is not restricted to abiding by or judging according to the rules; it certainly does demand that, but also requires that we balance justice with kindness” (p. 6). Balance is vital. “Love without social justice... is sentimentality; it is the Hallmark card that offers sweet words but leaves human lives and relationships pretty much

the way they were before the card was delivered” (Shapiro, 2006, p. 120).

Cone (1998) relates the story of the celebrated 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, who in interpreting the Mosaic laws said, “there is none saying ‘You shall believe’ or ‘You shall not believe.’ All say ‘You shall do’ or ‘You shall not do’” (p. 7). Justice and loving kindness are in the *doing* – the doing of the right thing. This phraseology of Mendelssohn sounds very similar to that of the character, Yoda, in the film, Star Wars, who tells young Skywalker “*do or do not* – there is no *try*.”

Democracy, justice and loving-kindness are “ultimately about action” (Shapiro, 2006, p. 112) and about choice. They are a path, a way of doing in the world.

Heschel, in 1965, epitomized the idea of “actively” combining justice and loving kindness when he marched in Selma with Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Civil Rights movement, commenting that he was praying with his feet. *Tzedakah* is sometimes

translated as *charity*, which is a part of justice and of showing justice. Such is why “Jews give, not out of a sense of charity, but out of the sense of justice. The practice of giving is in their collective memory” (Cone, 1989, p. 7).

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concepts of justice (*tzedakah*) and loving kindness (*hesed*) are actions as well as philosophies that awaken us to compassion, which is a by-product of the service-learning process. Unfortunately, justice without loving-kindness can create hardened autocrats and loving-kindness without justice can lead to the sentimentality mentioned above, and to inaction. Both of these concepts and actions are important in doing the right thing along life’s journey.

*Tzedakah*  
צדקה

**Justice & Righteousness**

**Perspectives:** Do the right thing.  
The Way (Halakha). Charity.

**Metaphor:** The Journey/Path

*“Justice, justice shall you pursue...”*  
- Deuteronomy 16:20

The concept of *Mishpatim* (rules) for proper treatment of people is a constant refrain in Judaism. As far as Judaism is concerned, a society should be judged not on how many people are rich but on how we treat the “least” of a community, including how we treat the poor, the orphaned, the widow, and the Other.

Indeed, “Jewish law focuses on obligations, American jurisprudence on rights” (Telushkin, 2000, p. 121). Obligation by both God and people for *doing* is shaped by the following Morning Prayer (edited for space). “Praised are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who...

- made me free,
- gives sight to the blind,
- clothes the naked,
- releases the bound,
- raises the downtrodden,
- guides us on our path,
- restores vigor to the weary”

Giving voice to the voiceless, clothing the naked, strengthening the weak, caring for the less fortunate....these are all actions and experiences that repair the world, and these rules and laws ensure judicial protection for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Telushkin (1997) clarifies that the injunction against cursing the deaf also applies to insulting those not present, or not aware of what you are saying. Similarly “if people ask your advice on a matter on which you have more information than they do, don’t take advantage of their ‘blindness’ by giving them bad advice that will cause them to suffer” (p. 460). Imagine such a global obligation! I can.

Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler (2008) state that global citizenship is about the obligation to respect and protect the people around us and the world in which we live. It is about ethical and mindful action.

A. Johnson (2006) reminds us that “to perpetuate privilege and oppression, we don’t even have to do anything consciously to support it” (p 88). Therefore, he suggests that we act – against injustice.

Freire (1970/2000) also viewed a humanized society requiring cultural freedom and complete public participation of all people in combating these injustices. It is not enough to feed the hungry and clothe the naked; we are required to create social and economic arrangements so people do not find themselves in such circumstances in the first place. Levinas (1989/1993) stresses our obligation to the Other.

Schwalbe (2005) recaps that “sociological mindfulness also reminds us that we can change a small part of the social world single-handedly” (p. 239). Purpel (1989) writes “the core of our moral crisis and anguish... reflects the glaring contradiction between our most deeply felt moral conviction - that which affirms the

essential dignity of each person - and our most widespread social policy - that which demands that each person must achieve (i.e., that each of us has to earn our dignity)” (p. 34).

Burg (2008) adds that “today you can be more than all or nothing. You can observe the commandments without believing in God; and you can believe in God without observing the commandments... Times have changed, and with them also our capacity to contain others whose beliefs or disbeliefs are contrary to ours” (p. 212). Spaces are opening for these social justice and action oriented rules of conduct.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of having social justice guidelines may offer another pathway for service-learning and global codes of ethics.

## *Mishpatim*

משפטים

### **Rules & Obligations**

**Perspectives:** Moral compass.  
Commitment. Duty. Guidelines.

**Metaphors:** Clothing the Naked.  
Lifting the Weary

*“You shall not insult the deaf, or place  
a stumbling block before the blind.”*

- Leviticus 19:15

The concepts of *Rahmanut* (compassion) and *Gemilut Hasadim* (acts of loving-kindness) are underlying themes in Judaism. Can one teach compassion? It is a question that haunts and inspires philosophers, scholars, researchers, and educators to this very day.

Telushkin (1997) commented on the commandment to “Love your neighbor as yourself, I am God” (from Leviticus 19:18), stating that “since love is demonstrated through deeds, this law implies that we must act in the same loving manner towards others as we want them to act towards us. This is the first time that this injunction, the basis of the Golden Rule, is recorded in world literature” (p. 465). He continues that people generally omit the final words of “I am God” which serves a very important function

emphasizing that since God created people, it is an instruction on how to act. Of course it is easier to love “humanity” but not the flawed person who lives next door.

That is why Buber (1947/1995) adds that since you love yourself with all your faults so you must “love your neighbor, no matter how many faults you see in him” (p. 83).

Rabbi Hillel in handing out practical advice about the laws in the Torah famously changed this Golden Rule to...”what is hateful unto you, do not do unto your neighbor, the rest is commentary, now go study!” Think out the subtle differences between the Golden Rule and Hillel’s interpretation, yet both are predicated on action. Eisler (2000) points out that “at this point in our cultural evolution, when the rapid change from the industrial to postindustrial society is destabilizing many

entrenched beliefs and institutions, we have the opportunity to bring our cultural evolution more in line with the evolutionary thrust in our species towards our highest human potentials - including our powerful need and capacity for love. In fact, we humans have from the beginning been unconscious co-creators of our evolution. Both our culture and much of our physical environment are human creations. But to take advantage of the tremendous opportunity offered by our unsettled time, we have to become conscious co-creators of a partnership future” (p. 87).

This applies to the culture of schools. Shapiro (2006) adds that in the school “what is learned does not have much to do with increasing the wisdom we have about the purpose or significance of our lives, or our

capacity to help shape a more just, free, and compassionate culture” (p. 9).

Eisler (2008) comments that research shows when people feel cared for, they become fully alive and are more productive and

innovative; however, she also points out that the invisibility, weakening, and devaluation of caring and caregiving work make it more difficult to use caring and compassion, the very attributes needed to solve the world’s seemingly insoluble problems.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of compassion is not just a *feeling* but a *doing*. Compassion (and acts of loving-kindness) can be further invested in the practice of service-learning. Both Jewishly-informed and service-learning epistemologies have the potential to melt the cold-heartedness that permeates our society, leading to a more compassionate way.

*Rahmanut & Gemilut Hasadim*  
רחמנות / גמילות חסדים  
**Compassion & Deeds of Loving-Kindness**

**Perspectives:** Compassion. Kindness.  
Compassionate Humanity

**Metaphor:** Compassionate Midwives

*“For there will never cease to be needy people in your land, which is why I command: open your hands to the poor and needy.” - Deuteronomy 15: 11*

The concept of *K'hilah* (community) is the foundation of Jewish knowing and being. Community also includes relationships, identity, responsibility, obligation, Mitzvot (commandments), and “oneness” – the notion that we are all connected.

Arthur Green (2006) says: “For all of us humans, God is most to be discovered within the human community, in relationships with others in knowing ourselves. In fact, our search for God is fully bound up with our being human; our knowledge of Y-H-W-H is in no way separable from our own humanity” (p. 23).

The search for God is the metaphor for learning and we do this together within the community, within our humanity. I believe strongly in the power of community. At the heart of this way of knowing are relationships and the spaces and values that emerge from dealings and interactions. The “Midrash may not tell us what the Bible meant in its own time, but often tells us how particular narratives are comprehended by the Jewish community, and therefore how certain texts have shaped communal values” (Plaskow, 1990, p.17).

I think that Dewey was focused on the idea of community but not just any community – one of mutual belonging. Dewey meant that it is not just our interactions but our transactions that tell the story. According to Fishman & McCarthy (2007), for Dewey, the word “transaction” signifies that “we and the world affect each other” (p. 28) and in the idea of “co-creation.” I personally like the word and metaphor of co-creation. There is a rich tradition in Judaism of being co-creators with the divine and with fellow humans that

continues to construct, shape, and influence community.

Freire (2001) speaks of the difference between rebelliousness and revolution and remarks that “transformation of the world implies a dialectic between the two actions: announcing the process of dehumanization and announcing the dream of the new society” (p. 74). These apply to education as well.

hooks (1994) conveys the idea of another community - the classroom community - a relationship in which “our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing what is one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence” (p. 8).

Shapiro (2006) adds, “we need to think of the education we give our children as a process that addresses mind, heart, and spirit – in other words, as a process that forms us as mature individuals, and as people who live in relationship with others” (p. 203).

Maxine Greene (1988) claims that “there is almost no serious talk of

reconstituting a civic order, a community” (p. 2). I endorse what Judaism and the process of service-learning seek – a civic community – interrelated and helping each other. I believe there is a way towards this. “No being or thing exists independently of any other being or thing. Existence is, rather, a state of interbeing or webbed interrelationship with everyone and everything” (Safran, 2003, p. 304).

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of community actually connects us to a global community. Service-learning involves the civic obligation of all communities to view the humanity of all of its members and encourage/ support the continuing growth of all people. We are indeed all our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers.

## *K'hilah* קהילה **Community**

**Perspectives:** Connection. Family.  
Commitment. Open Spaces.  
Relationships. Oneness.

**Metaphor:** Gathering at Mt. Sinai

*“...Am I my brother’s keeper?”*  
- Genesis 4:9

The concept of *Avodah* (service) is a misunderstood idea. *Avodah* once exclusively meant *service to God* but has come to also imply *service to others* – to help others. Dorff (200) explains that “Jewish and Christian traditions provide multiple reasons to help those in need. In all human acts, we are motivated by many things, some more prominent in our consciousness and more compelling at the moment than others, perhaps, but all play a role in getting us to do what we do. Furthermore, what goads us into action today may be different tomorrow. Thus even though one particular ground for helping others may dominate a person’s thinking and acting today, other rationales for doing so may nevertheless play a role now and may become primary at another time. Both Judaism and Christianity were wise in suggesting multiple reasons to help others in need” (p. 42).

When the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E. the *sacrifice service* transformed into a prayer/ religious services, and service to others as we know it today – helping others. Telushkin (2000) explains that “the Hebrew word to pray, *l’hitpallel*, literally means ‘to judge and examine oneself.’ This meaning surprises many people since prayer normally is thought of as petitionary, coming before God asking for what we want. In fact, the prayer book contains mostly communal prayers and praise. The definition of *l’hitpallel* clearly conveys what the primary goal of the prayer service is: to motivate us to service” (p. 166).

We are motivated to service by *Tikkun Olam* and the Jewish values outlined in this chapter. “For decades, Jewish professionals have been intrigued with Isaac

Luria’s interpretation of the mystical concept of *tzimtzum* (contraction). It was from the deliberate act of *tzimtzum* at the time of Creation that God pulled back and made space for the universe and humans. As God contracted, the theory goes, divine light was disbursed, but the light was so strong that it shattered the vessels into which it was to have been contained. The shattering of the vessels sent sparks of light out into the world, and ever since, humans have been obligated to reunite the sparks and bring healing to the world” (Schuster, 2003, p. 149). This is a form of service.

Service takes many forms, indeed, “Jewish law attributes great significance to the performance of kind acts. Indeed, making the effort to perform such deeds is a

real challenge since, as we become older, many of us find it easier to be charitable with our money than with our time. Therefore, Jewish tradition teaches that offering one’s time and one’s heart represents the highest type of giving” (Telushkin, 2000, p. 8).

That is why I feel that true meaning of service is removing differentiation between each other and divinity. Of the nature of service, Buber (1947/1995) writes, “This is the service man must perform all of his days: to shape matter into form, to refine the flesh, to let the light penetrate the darkness, until the darkness itself shines and there is no longer any division between the two. As it is written: ‘And there was evening and there was morning, one day’” (p. 49).

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of service-learning starts with the word *service* placed before the word *learning*. That is an important distinction - we learn from our service. I feel that is the way all learning should occur.

## Avodah

עבודה

## Service

**Perspectives:** Service. Support.  
Divine Work. Comfort. Aid.

**Metaphor:** Servant leader (Moses)

*“The world rests on three things – on Torah, on Avodah [service], and Gemilut Hasadim [deeds of love].” – Pirkei Avot 1:2*

The concept of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) is part of the Jewish mindset of making the world a better place. *Tikkun Olam* is a call to action, and that is why social and political activism is prevalent as one of the Jewish ways of *knowing-doing*. *Tikkun Olam* should be the curriculum of each of our lives. “In this sense curriculum is a turning to the world to redeem it and ourselves. Curriculum is to engage in *Tikkun Olam*. That is, curriculum is redemptive: in it we become God and God becomes us. The world is healed by our own healing. The relevance of a Jewish voice begins to emerge” (Block, in Shapiro, 1999, pp. 179-180).

*Tikkun Olam* is a path of life towards activism. It is the WAY. According to Dorff (2008), the concept of *Tikkun Olam* is a relatively new one, based on the classical Judaism’s terms of *hesed*, *tzedek*, and *mishpat*. He writes that “*Hesed*, originally meant loyalty - to God and to your neighbor” (p. 4). He continues that *Tzedek* means justice and that *mishpat* derives from the same root as *judge*, and “in the Bible the word *mishpat* expands yet further to mean justice” (p. 5). He concludes that “in the Bible the values of justice and kindness are often spoken of together to indicate that they balance and reinforce each other” (p. 5).

*Tikkun Olam* is an on-going and transformative process – never finished. Paulo Freire (2001) talked often of the unfinishedness of our being (p. 52) as well as being with world (p. 58), and of our identities in the process of construction (p. 62). He felt that “our teaching space is a text that has to be consistently read,

interpreted, written and rewritten” (p. 89) and, I add, reinterpreted and acted upon. It is our incompleteness that opens up the space for both education and *Tikkun Olam*, which are entwined, providing us with critical, reflective, liberating, and eternal hope.

Giroux (2010) reiterates that “we live in a historic moment of both crisis and possibility, one that presents educators, parents, artists, and others with the opportunity to take up the challenge of reimagining civic engagement and social transformation, but these activities have a chance of succeeding only if we also defend and create those social, economic, and cultural conditions that enabled the current generation of young people to nurture thoughtfulness, critical agency, compassion, and democracy itself” (pp. 76-7).

Maxine Greene (1988) talks about this difficulty when she states that “we have been speaking of multiple perspectives, thinking about freedom in relation to community and to the possibility of a common world” (p. 87). That includes good communication.

“We have a responsibility to make it clear to others what it is that we need. ...So don’t just love your neighbor, make sure you give your neighbor a chance to love you” (Telushkin, 2000, p. 344). *Tikkun Olam* is about being co-creators and co-repairers in a common world, in need of and being constantly repaired.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of repairing the world ties into the concept of service-learning. Through service, students learn that in the act of co-creation and activism, a different way of acting in the world is indeed possible, repairing pieces together.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Tikkun Olam</i> תיקון עולם <b>Repairing the World</b></p> <p><b>Perspectives:</b> Activism. Peace. Partnership. Transformation.</p> <p><b>Metaphors:</b> Co-Creators with God. Repairing the world</p> <p><i>“You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.”</i> - Exodus 23:9</p>
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The concept of *Mitzvot* (commandments) highlights the importance of responsibility in Judaism. According to Sacks (2005) “the ethic of responsibility is the best answer I know to the meaning and meaningfulness of a life” (p. 6). We live in fearful times, yet according to Sacks “the only antidote to fear is responsibility: the refusal to believe that there is nothing we can do, the decision never to take refuge in blaming others, making them the scapegoats for own frustrations and fears” (p. 270). Buber (1947/2006) further explains that “genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding” (p. 18).

Telushkin (1997) writes that although the Ten Commandments of the Hebrew Bible are generally regarded as one of the most important contributions to Western Civilization (p. 418), he usually finds that less than fifteen percent of his audience even knows, understands, or integrates what the commandments

say. For if they did, he believes, there would be no gossip. He asserts that the last six of these commandments “start by dealing with actions, but make it clear that the goal of transforming people’s actual behavior is ultimately transforming their inner selves” (p. 420).

There is relationship between people, their beliefs, lived experiences, practices (such as habits of reflective inquiry and social intelligence), and institutions (such as our schools) which co-create the ongoing processes that forge reflective inquired and action-oriented communities. That is why Green (2010) remarks that “Judaism remains a religion of *Mitzvot*, powerful religious deeds with which we

respond to the divine call. The most characteristically religious act of Judaism is ‘doing a mitzvah,’ a term that is sometimes extended beyond those things commanded in the Torah” (p. 157).

“The *point* of the Commandments is that the world isn’t like them, that the Commandments are contrary to the way the world really is. That is why we value them; that is how they come to elevate us above merciless nature and unjust social usage” (Ozick, in Heschel, 1995, pp. 145-14). Indeed, that is why *Oseh Hese*d – the obligation of *doing loving-kindness* is implied by Levinas (1989/1993) in “responsibility for the Other” (p. 246).

This ties in the responsibility of *Tikkun Olam* as mentioned previously. Such is why Burg (2008) speaks of a new definition of human responsibility, a faith of responsibility based on the fate of man and his community, as evidence of God’s greatness on earth. He feels that “the most important Jewish

legacy is to assume responsibility for repair, redemption, restoration, and reconstruction of the ruins” (p. 208).

Responsibility is a connector. Purpel (1989) adds that “responsibility involves the celebration of social connections; guilt involves the pain of social demands” (p. 44). Sacks (2005) talks about the ethic of responsibility and how in the process of lifting others, we are also lifted (p. 6). I trust in the power of lifting, as opposed to tearing down, of people.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of responsibility and obligation form a cornerstone of service-learning, whose actions create mindful ways to connect and lift up ourselves and others.

*Mitzvot, Dibrot, & Ahrayut*  
מִצְוֹת / דְּבָרוֹת / אַחֲרָיוּת

**Commandments & Responsibility**

**Perspectives:** Deeds of Merit. Mindfulness.  
Considerate Speech.

**Metaphor:** Corners of the field

*“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or of gather the gleanings of your harvest... you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger...”*

- Leviticus 19:9-10

The concepts of *Shabbat* (Sabbath) and *Menuḥa* (rest) as catalysts for reflection and transformation are primal and prevailing aspects of Judaism. I always found it amazing that God, the supreme, omnipresent, omniscient, and all-powerful Being had to rest. But what does “rest” mean? Telushkin (1997) writes that “although the Sabbath importance is suggested by its being the only ritual law in the Ten Commandments, there is little specific Sabbath legislation in the Bible” (p. 429).

Therefore, Shabbat is open to interpretation. I re-interpret God’s *resting* as *reflection*, a meaning emerging with an ethical and moral precept. Perhaps a “break” was, and is, necessary – to rest AND reflect upon the creative processes. Reflection and especially self-reflection set us apart from other creatures and provide our humanity. In our busy society, in our hectically paced “doing,” we often have not scheduled time to step back, to think about, feel, and embody our accomplishments and actions. Without this rest break, the doing can become routine, meaningless, and uninspiring. In this Jewish way of knowing, the experience or doing which comes first is followed by the rest and reflection that can heal and transform the experience. That is one amazing revelation.

Waskow (1998) explains it as “to make *not* making” (p. 180). Heschel (2005) poetically states it best when he writes about Shabbat, “To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day long which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence of external obligations, a day on which we stop

worshipping the idols of technical civilization, a day on which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow man and the forces of nature – is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for man’s progress than the Sabbath?” (p. 28).

For a moment in time and space, as Heschel reminds us, the Sabbath is a palace in time (p. 15) - we step back, and reflect, are awed by all that has been done, or are disgusted enough to want to change what was, what is, and what will be done. Where else does reflection reside beside the Sabbath? It resides in the many junctions and spaces opened and shaped by our lived

experience, our dialogic and mutual relationships, and our reflective practices, which I feel is this place called *education*. For Freire (2001) “education takes place when there are two learners who occupy somewhat different spaces in an ongoing dialogue. But both participants bring knowledge to the relationship, and one of

the objects of the pedagogic process is to explore what each knows and what they can teach each other. A second object is to foster reflection on the self as actor in the world in consequence of knowing” (p. 8).

This “reflection on the self” reflects on society. As Kincheloe & Steinberg (1993) consider, “self-reflection would become a priority with teachers and students, as post-formal educators attend to the impact of school and society on the shaping of the self” (p. 301).

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concepts of rest and reflection tie into the critical reflective portion of service-learning. Without time and ways to reflect on the done and doing, learning becomes an incomplete process, for self and for society.

### *Shabbat & Menuḥa*

שבת / מנוחה

### **Sabbath & Rest**

**Perspectives:** Reflection. Healing.  
Renewal. Transformation.

**Metaphor:** God reflecting

*“And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it, because in it God rested from all the work in which creating He had made.” - Genesis 2:3*



The concept of *Yisra'el* (struggle) is fundamental to Jewish history, memory, community, perspectives, relationships, and psyche. The Torah story of Jacob wrestling with the angel (or himself?) illustrates the power of “struggle” to permanently change a person. Jacob is not only changed physically - walking with a limp as a permanent reminder of his struggle - he is also altered emotionally - and in his identity of self - transformed and re-named *Israel/ Yisra'el* literally meaning *struggled with God*. He is no longer immature and fearful. Therefore, struggle is a very significant Jewish way of *doing*.

Waskow (1978) highlights another metaphorical look at the idea of struggle. He questions why so much of the Book of Genesis is concerned with the struggle between first and second brothers. He sees it as “two-level teaching” that the firstborn is not to dominate even though in most cultures, the first born inherits wealth, power, and blessings, but neither is the second born to dominate. Waskow sees this subtle teaching as a way to end all domination towards (and from) “second-borns” such as women, people of color, handicapped, and homosexuals (p. 20).

S. Heschel (1983) struggles with the (invisible) myths and language that create and perpetuate reality. She writes that we “unconsciously draw on ancient Jewish legends such as those describing the mysterious, threatening Lilith, the mythical female demon. In their struggle with contemporary discrimination, feminists are actually wrestling with these unspoken, hidden images which often keeps the community from making changes even when no rules forbid them” (p. XLIX). It is

this struggle with existing frameworks and paradigms that have the potential of creating, incorporating, and transforming into new frameworks and paradigms with more inclusiveness. Shapiro (2006) writes that “Jewish pedagogy offered history as the long struggle for spiritual and physical survival. Becoming aware of and learning to identify with this history provided a student with a compass through which to orient his or her life around a powerful moral and spiritual vision” (p. 74).

In Plato’s *Republic*, there are many examples of the push and pull of conflicting forces – The Socratic Method is emblematic of this struggle. The dialectic is part of the process. It is the student / teacher relationship, integrating the learner and learned. “Moses, who received the text of the written Torah, did not understand the depths of the interpretations and inferences built upon it. In some sense, all these inferences are embodied in the text, but they are not assessable to anyone at any given time, no matter how wise and learned. Only the historical process of

continuing dialectic discussion can draw them forth” (Scheffler, 1995, p. 184).

Purpel (1989) taught that “education should serve primarily to facilitate the struggle for meaning” (p. 28). I understand this to mean that it is the dialectic process - the struggle - that makes knowledge embodied and alive.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of struggling pairs with the critical reflective practice of service-learning. Does the critical reflection allow one to see multiple perspectives, or does the ability to see multiple and competing interpretations help one be more critically reflective? Together, they struggle with this!

## *Yisra'el*

יִשְׂרָאֵל

## Struggle

**Perspectives:** Dialectic. Conflict.  
Multiple & Competing Viewpoints.

**Metaphor:** Wrestling

*“...And Jacob was left alone. And a man  
wrestled with him until the break of dawn.”*

- Genesis 32:24

The concept of She'elah Bekortit (critical questioning everything) is often joked about in Judaism but is quite serious. For instance, why do Jews often answer a question with a question? The answer is "why not?" There are many stories about Jews challenging and questioning the actions, as well as the intentions, of God and their fellow humans. So what is the difference between the concept of struggle and that of critical questioning? The idea of critically questioning is the starting point to the process – identifying that which is possibly incongruent or unknown – and the struggle becomes another action part of the particularly Jewish way of dealing with information. It is not the Jewish way of knowing to simply accept and not explore the answers we receive to our questions, for there are always other answers. Exploring all aspects of an answer brings both the question and answer to life. Cone (1989) reminds us that Judaism "is often more concerned with questions than answers and more with deed than belief" (p. 7).

Many philosophers are Jewish and use their Jewish ways of knowing to help others. "Sigmund Freud, the founder of psycho-analysis, was 70 years old when he wrote in a letter: 'only to my Jewish nature did I owe the two qualities which had become indispensable to me on my hard road.' Because he was a Jew, he said, his mind was free to question all things. And, being a Jew, he was used to standing his ground in the face of all opposition" (Cone, 1989, p. 3). Anyon (1980) reminds us not to be afraid to say you disagree. Questioning takes the fear out of seeing other perspectives because it opens space for more questions. It is part tradition and part

imagining possibilities that keeps us questioning. Shapiro (2006) declares that "we must be willing to ask the uncomfortable questions about what it would mean for a society like ours to construct a culture that ensures that everyone is treated with dignity and worth" (p. 63). The questioning is not for seeking one "true" answer – it is a journey unto itself.

Or as Green (2006) proclaims, "our quest is not a question, one that would require a specific answer. But the quest itself leads us to an act of affirmation" (p. xxxiii). The *action* of critically questioning is hard work but also highly rewarding. "This divided awareness is both burdensome

and liberating...To approach texts critically is not to dismiss them. On the contrary, it can be part of what it means to take sources seriously as a modern person. When we understand the meaning of a religious text in and for its time, we are freer to take the text and apply it to our

own time" (Plaskow, 1990, p. 17).

In critical questioning and critically listening, we truly connect to other people and learn. Fiumara (2006) reveals that we cannot have experiences without asking questions stating that "an inability to listen to the answer renders the question useless" (p. 31).

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of critically questioning is manifested in the critical reflective portion of the practice of service-learning. The service-learner first performs a function and then hears and understands deeper through subsequent and on-going cycle of critical questioning, discussion, reflection, and questioning again.

### *She'elah Bekortit*

שעלה בקורתית

### **Critical Questioning**

**Perspectives:** Questioning everything.

Dialogic Interaction. Perspectives.

Curiosity. Examination.

**Metaphor:** Challenging God

*"Let not my Lord be angry if I question but this last time: What if ten should be found here?"*

- Genesis 18: 32

The concepts of *Herut* (liberation) and *Hofesh* (freedom) are constantly repeated themes in Judaism. Every Passover, Jewish families and communities around the world celebrate freedom via readings and enactments of the exodus from Egypt. In doing so, the experience, the act, is imprinted in bodily and cognitive memory – reminding us to *act* whenever we see oppression. The idea of freedom has many manifestations and permutations.

Freedom, and its opposite, oppression, can be experienced externally or internally. We can be freed from physical danger or from hegemonic beliefs and societal assumptions.

However, with freedom comes obligation and responsibility to fight for the freedom of everyone and to respect their processes to express and enact their freedoms. As is with democracy, freedom can be messy. The process of moving from a slave mentality to a freedom mentality is a very difficult process. The Seder is a lifelong learning process that reminds us not to enslave others and to cherish freedom for all.

Perhaps that is one of the reasons that the Jewish community is highly active in the process of social justice. Shapiro (1999) adds that “the Seder becomes much more than a retelling of long-ago historical events. The purpose is clearly to interrogate our present world to find in it the current forms of enslavement and suffering, and to do that from the vantage point of hope and possibility about a world in which exile and injustice have ended” (p. 6). It is a recurring education and a powerful tool needed for experiencing freedom and liberation.

hooks (1994) proclaims, “I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries.

It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom” (p.12).

Greene (1988) writes of the relationship between freedom and a moral community (p.118) - “the matter of freedom, then, in a diverse society is also a matter of power, as it involves the issue of a public space” (p. 116), where the space opens for the pursuit of freedom (p. 128). Within these open spaces, we have the freedom to continue to explore and learn (pp. 120-121). These spaces are also spaces of action.

According to Hudak & Kihn (2001), “Love and liberation from suffering both lie in a realm beyond language; they are directly experienced and immediate – not concepts” (p. 253). Liberation is about the relationship and the understanding that comes from the connection between the liberating act of education and the relationships between people as they liberate each other.

“We’re not just talking about our individual liberation but how to help the community we live in, how to help our families, our country, and the whole continent, not to mention the world and the

galaxy as far as we want to go” (Chodron, 2000, p. 76).

In a society that *commodifies* people, not only will relationships continue to suffer, but so will education, the critical process, and, of course, the process of liberation.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of freedom is enacted in the practice of service-learning. These include: the freedom to learn: to make new connections to people, ideas, and interpretations; to critically reflect; to open oneself up to new experiences and spaces; to explore conflicting viewpoints; and to be responsible for continuing freedom.

### *Herut & Hofesh*

חירות / חופש

### **Liberation & Freedom**

**Perspectives:** Choice.  
Liberatory. Emancipation.

**Metaphor:** Slaves leaving Egypt

*“And you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land for all its inhabitants...”*

- Leviticus 25:10

The concept of *Hahnasat Orhim* (literally “welcoming guests” or the act of hospitality) is an *inviting* theme in Judaism. Sacks (2005) highlights this Jewish ethic and way of knowing by stating that “Jewish ethics is refreshingly down-to-earth. If someone is in need, give. If someone is lonely, invite them home. If someone you know has recently been bereaved, visit them and give them comfort. If you know of someone who has lost their job, do all you can to help them find another. The sages called this ‘imitating God’. They went further: giving hospitality to a stranger, they said, is ‘even greater than receiving the divine presence. This is a religion at its most humanizing and humane. So too is the insistence that the ethical life is a form of celebration. Doing good is not painful, a matter of dour duty and a chastising conscious” (p. 5).

Shapiro (2006) reminds the reader that at the Passover festival, participants are expected to re-experience the oppression of slavery as if we are living these events today, and to welcome the stranger to the Seder meal (p. 119).

Felman (2001) agrees that “you don’t have to be Jewish to feel invisible or excluded” (p.76). Exclusionary experiences can lead one to work hard to counter these inhospitable actions and practices. Buber (1947/1995) restates that “three pillars support the world: teaching, service, and good deeds, and, as the world approaches its end, the first two will shrink, and only good deeds will grow” (p. 115). I say that *good deeds*, such as showing hospitality,

demonstrate and integrate both *teaching* and *service* in their ways. I think this is a (role) model worth emulating.

Telushkin (2000) writes that “for thousands of years, Abraham has been the role model for Jews who wish to practice the mitzvah of hospitality (*hachnasat orchim*). He actively seeks out guests, rushes to meet their needs, and gives even more than he has promised. Who wouldn’t want to be entertained by such a host” (p. 227). We never know who our “guests” will turn out to be. That is why we are reminded to “be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for

thereby some have entertained angels unaware” (Hebrews 13:2).

One kind act can change the world. As Rabbi Tarfon taught, “It is not your obligation to complete the task [of perfecting the world], but neither are you free to desist [from doing all you can]” Pirkei Avot 2:21. That is why hospitality is a good place to start in perfecting the world. With all the

inhospitable actions and banter in the halls of government, in the media, in our schools, and in communities, there are so many places to start this action.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of hospitality offers the service-learning community a perspective on treating those we serve as welcomed guests, rushing to meet *their* needs (not ours) and giving more than promised. This Jewish attitude and way of hospitality simultaneously addresses both servant and the served, student and learner, familiar and strange, known and unknown, human and divine, who are in reality the same.

### *Hahnasat Orhim* הכנסת אורחים **Hospitality (welcoming of guests)**

**Perspectives:** Random (and Planned)  
Acts of Kindness.

**Metaphors:** Washing feet of guests.  
Inviting the Stranger to Seder

*“And Abraham looked up and saw three men standing near him and he ran to the entrance of the tent to greet them and bowed to the ground saying ‘My lords, if it pleases you, do not go past your servant. Take some water and wash your feet and lie down under the tree. Let me get you some bread that you may refresh yourselves...”*

- Genesis 18:2-5

The concept of *Shema* (listening and hearing) is a central theme in Judaism. It is the Shofar blast that wakes us to the power of listening and hearing. Telushkin (1997) finds that those six simple words of the Shema prayer “summarize monotheism’s essential ethical and philosophical revolution” (p. 487) – that God is one and that we are one. In loving God, one does it with all of one’s heart, soul, and might. It is an embodied action-oriented love, quite different from the fear-based gods of ancient, and even modern, times. Fear immobilizes, while love energizes and activates. One way to increase love is through the act of truly listening to another.

Fiumara (2006), the philosopher of “listening,” points out that “there is a whole world yet to be discovered, not of unsolved issues but of relationships among things we know, of ways in which they might fit together” (p. 17). Active listening is a journey that can bring together the pieces in new and innovative, social-action ways. Freire (2001) reminds us that “to accept and respect what is different is one of those virtues without which listening cannot take place” (p. 108).

Listening and hearing have been compared to the maieutic (birthing) process. There is real labor in active listening and in truly hearing what people are saying, as well as being open to the change this might stimulate. I agree with Fiumara’s (2006) proposal that the “educational process is understood as an authentic birth and growth of mind” (p. 130). The metaphors of giving birth and of dying are quite applicable to education, and especially service-learning. At every turn, good midwives /educators need to form relationships that are not

controlling, that allow for the birth/rupture of presumptions in the world of the educator and educated, to birth / deliver new ideas. In understanding that these births of new ideas and action create death of old ideas and action, we need not fear a listening process.

Jewish tradition suggests we talk less and listen more. In the story of Elijah (1 Kings 19: 11-12), God was **NOT** found in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire - but found *after* the fire, in “a still small voice.” Theologically Elijah’s experience is about the importance of close and patient listening.

This is one of the reasons why I so enjoy learning through the process of listening, discussing, and facing assumptions

- within and outside of traditional academia. Meaning is modulated through connection and relationship, which are the foundation of education and service-learning.

Naples (2002) explains that service-learning is a collaborative learning environment which subverts the cultural ideals and social

practices that maintain the status quo (p. 24). She believes the lack of listening contributes to the acceptance and maintenance of hegemonic structures.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concepts of active-listening and profound hearing are extremely important to service-learning. It is via the act of listening that agencies and their problems are understood and solved together, and that other ways of being and *doing* are explored and appreciated. Lack of listening can lead to unsatisfying and unsatisfied service-learning projects, and “learners” who do not actually learn and grow from challenging their beliefs, feelings, and actions towards others and themselves.

## *Shema* שמע **Hear!**

**Perspectives:** Active Listening.

**Metaphors:** God’s booming voice at Mt. Sinai. The Still Small Voice. The Shofar blast.

*“Hear, O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord Alone” (Alt; The Lord is One, or the Lord is Unique)  
- Deuteronomy 6:4*

The concepts of *Todah* (thanks), *Todot* (gratitude) and *Hakarat HaTov* (being grateful), thankfully, are important themes in Judaism. Here in America we have Thanksgiving on November 24. Why is it only once a year? Today, people seem to feel that they are not enough or that they do not have enough. In Judaism, thanksgiving day is every day and at every moment. The first prayer that Jewish people recite when they awake is a short but powerful prayer called *Modeh Ani* translated as “*I give thanks before You, living and eternal King, who has returned (restored) my soul into me in compassion. Your faithfulness is immense.*” Such gratitude refocuses the self.

What are our priorities? Heschel (1951-1993) writes that “by foregoing beauty for goodness, power for love, grief for gratitude, by entreating the Lord for help to understand our hopes, for strength to resist our fears, we may receive a gentle sense of the holiness permeating the air like a strangeness that cannot be removed” p. 90). Telushkin (2000) states that the *Talmud* teaches the concept of measure for measure - “thus gratitude should be expressed in the same manner in which the deeds evoking gratitude were performed” (p. 234). Gratitude is the strong glue that holds thoughts and deeds together.

Green (2006) explains that “religious humanism, as I understand it, means a realization that the task is ours to do; we no longer wait for the divine hand, separate from our own, to come and save. But this acceptance of responsibility is itself a sacred act for us. We seek to accept, with deep humbling gratitude, the role of the actor for divine compassion and the world of physical reality. The voice of God *does* speak to us at Sinai, but it is none other than

the voice of Moses. The hands and feet of God *do* bring redemption, but they are none other than our own limbs, offered by as to our Maker in order to fulfill their true purpose” (p. 173).

Gratitude is part of the learning process. “You don’t have to learn very much from another person or ideology for Jewish ethics to impose upon you the obligation of gratitude; it is enough that you learn a ‘single chapter...a single verse [or] a single expression.’ Even if that is all you learn, you owe the person who taught it to you gratitude and respect” (Telushkin, 2000, p. 93). Yet gratitude is sorely lacking.

Heschel (1951-1993) reminds us that “only those who are spiritually imitators, only people who are afraid to be grateful and too weak to be loyal, have nothing but the present moment. To a noble person, it is a holy joy to remember, an overwhelming thrill to be grateful; while to a person whose character is neither rich nor strong, gratitude is the most painful sensation. The secret of wisdom is never to get lost in a momentary mood or passion, never to forget friendship because of a momentary grievance, never to lose sight of the lasting values because of a transitory episode. The things which sweep through our daily life should be valued according to whether or not they enrich the inner cistern. That only is valuable in our experience which is worth remembering. Remembrance is the touchstone of all actions” (p. 162) and I believe that gratitude is one route there.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of gratitude, being grateful, and thanksgiving entreats us to consider that we should enact these grateful ways with every interaction and action.

### *Todah, Todot, & Hakarat HaTov*

תודה/ תודות/הכרת הטוב

### **Thanks, Gratitude, & Being Grateful (recognizing the good)**

**Perspectives:** Appreciation.  
Choice. Thanksgiving.

**Metaphor:** Rejoicing at the Sea

*“Who is rich? He who rejoices in his portion.” - Pirkei Avot. Chapter 4:1b*

The concept of Havurah is a friendly foundational theme in Judaism, and Hevruta is a distinctively Jewish learning experience. Havurah literally means *company, society, group, or fellowship*. It refers to the recent movement among American Jews to form small, informal groups for prayer, study (Reimer, 1992), and celebration of Jewish holidays. Heschel (1995) suggests that these extended family gatherings serves as a model for types of communal associations that transcend the nuclear family – a type of “voluntary extended family” (p. 25).

Casey (1993) writes of religious community as family, with “sisterhood” as a “consciously valued and deliberately reproduced relationship” (p. 51). Buber (1970/1996) wrote of the “*I-Thou*” relationship as a deep reciprocal interpersonal connection, seeing the humanity and divinity within each person. *I-Thou* relationships are contrasted with *I-It* impersonal dealings in which relational power exchanges are not equitable or equal, possibly leading to hegemonic enactment of one epistemology or type of people over another.

Hevruta learning and discussion is usually enacted in pairs. Socrates, in his Socratic Method, I believe, was not in a hevruta. I feel that the Socratic Method is a one-sided relationship - it implies that one person arrogantly *possesses* the knowledge and is trying to *assist* the other in reaching a similar conclusion. In hevruta, both of the participants are open to the possibility that what they know at the beginning of the encounter may not be what they know by the end of that encounter. The Hevruta encounter takes a certain amount of humility. Freire (2001) talks about this

humility as one of the few certainties of which he knows and “that nobody is superior to anyone else. The lack of humility expressed arrogantly in a false superiority of one person over another, of one race over another, of one sex over another, of one class or culture over another, is a transgression of our human vocation to develop.... It is fundamental for us to know that without certain qualities or virtues, such as a generous loving heart, respect for others, tolerance, humility, a joyful disposition, love of life, openness to what is new, a disposition to welcome change, perseverance in struggle, the refusal of determinism, a spirit of hope, and openness to justice, progressive pedagogical practice is not possible. It is something that the merely scientific, technical mind cannot accomplish” (p. 108). Therefore, being humble opens up the possibility for dialogue and for viewing multiple perspectives. I agree when Freire (1970/2000) states that “dialogue cannot exist without humility” (p. 90). Hevruta learning is important in this process.

That is why it is sad that the tradition of hevruta and is absent from many (Jewish) circles. Schuster (2003) quotes Borowitz who urges Jewish professionals to curb their tendencies for excessive control by making space for the people they serve. Then “others will be energized to speak, take risks, and find their own way of improving themselves and the world” (p. 150). Lear (1999) knows what happens to our relationships when “the space of inquiry has collapsed” (p. 44) – they die.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concepts of Havurah and Hevruta offer alternative relationship and encounter paradigms for service-learning, focusing on open dialogic / dialectic spaces of inquiry.

### Havurah & Hevruta חבורה / חברותא **Friendship & Study Circles**

**Perspectives:** Relationships.  
Fellowship. Community of Learners.  
Responsibility to (each) Other.

**Metaphor:** The Encounter (I/Thou).

*“Select a master teacher for yourself and  
acquire a colleague (friend) for study.”*

- Pirkei Avot, 1:6

The concept of *Teshuvah* (returning/repentance) is a comforting theme in Judaism. The Jewish bookends of repentance and redemption are very different from the Christian viewpoints of these concepts. Repentance and redemption from a Jewish viewpoint embody the chance for a “do-over” with emphasis on the *doing* portion. It is the way of *teshuvah* to re-turn, often from a figurative *galut* (diaspora). Green (2006) writes that “coming home is *teshuvah*, but in the fullest sense of that rich term. This word for ‘turning’ or ‘returning’ means much more than ‘repentance,’ as it is often translated. *Teshuvah* is the universal process of return” (p. 164).

Kaufmann (in Buber, 1970/1996) succinctly states that the conception of return is at the very heart of Judaism. “Jewish doctrine holds that a man can at any time return and be accepted by God. That is all... What the Hebrew tradition stresses is not the mere state of mind, the repentance, but the act of return” (p. 16).

Green (2006) adds that “our restoration of wholeness is not to be achieved by prayer...liturgy brings us only to the edge of the Jordan, but never takes us across to the Promised Land. For this we need to add the *deed* to our holy thoughts and words. *Teshuvah* and *tefillah* (prayer) need *tsedakah* (righteous doing) in order to be effective. We restore the world (in God’s name) to wholeness only by doing. In fact, our entire contemplative effort has been pointed towards realization in the realm of action. We are the bearers of compassion in this God-filled universe; so too are we ‘the limbs of the *Shekhinah*,’ the only ones who can make real in this world the sacred vision of holiness. Redemption is brought about only by the deed” (p. 169). Thus go, do, and return.

Telushkin (2000) recalls the passage in Maimonides’ “Law of Repentance” (3:4) which suggests that “we go through life always feeling as if our good and bad deeds are in perfect balance, so that the very next deed we perform will tip the balance either way. Maimonides then raises the stakes, asking us to imagine that the world is also poised in perfect balance, so that our next deed can tip the entire world to one side or the other” (p. 376). These are the pictures and metaphors which drive the action of redemption, a human condition waiting to be re-turned.

Shapiro (1999) reveals that “the polysemous text of Judaism have always had a dual narrative of redemption – the one of social justice and peace, and the one of an exiled nation that would return to its own land” (p. 9).

Green (2006) explains that “the exile of Israel from its holy land, place of its origin and the site of its promised redemption, is thus uplifted and transformed

into a dramatic replay, on the grand scale of history, of the universal human condition. We Jews are a parable of the human situation, both in our exile and in our faithfulness. Wherever men and women are exiled, the divine presence is there with them, suffering in their pain at a loss of home, sharing in their dreams of return and redemption” (p. 160).

Service-Learning perspective: Many people and institutions are, figuratively and literally, looking for redemption from their slavery so they may return and re-turn to a land overflowing with milk and honey. Service-learning can help the educational institutions, partnering agencies, students, and society re-turn to promised loving states.

## *Teshuvah*

## תשובה

### Re-turning & Repentance

**Perspectives:** Turning back.  
Reflecting back. Being Redeemed

**Metaphor:** Outstretched hand

*“I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians, and deliver you from their bondage and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great corrections.” - Exodus 6:6*



The concept of *Hesed* (loving-kindness) is a continuing theme in Judaism. Justice and loving-kindness are not just Jewish terms. “What is *hesed*? It is usually translated as ‘kindness’ but it also means ‘love’ – not love as emotion or passion, but love expressed as deed...Where *tzedakah* is a gift or loan of money, *hesed* is the gift of the person. It costs less and more: less because its gestures often cost little or nothing, more because it takes time and attention, existential generosity, the gift of self to self. More than anything else, *hesed* humanizes the world” (Sacks, 2005, p. 45-46).

Other religions and cultures also embrace these concepts. According to Chodron (1997), *Maitri* is the Sanskrit word, and *Hesed* is the Hebrew word, for the English translation of “loving kindness” which is described as “unconditional friendliness” (p. 21). As mentioned previously, *Hesed* originally meant loyalty, progressing to faithfulness to God and to your neighbor, becoming, “acts of love and kindness and care” (Dorff, 2008, p. 4). It is about walking the walk.

Continuing the idea of “guiding us on our path,” Waskow (1978) writes that “God said to Abraham, ‘Lehk lekha.’ ‘Get yourself walking toward yourself.’ Or ‘Reach out in order to find your innermost being’ ...But no translation quite works, for the two Hebrew words mean ‘Walk!’ and ‘Toward yourself’...The walking is where we have been ever since. On the way, making a path. Halakhah, the walking-way, the path of life” (p. 178). This reminds us to do the same.

According to Telushkin (1997), “the Rabbis point to several instances in the

Torah of divine behavior that human beings are expected to emulate. For example, because God is depicted as clothing the naked – ‘and the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them’ (Genesis 3:21) - human beings should do likewise and provide clothing for the poor. Because God visited the sick – ‘the Lord appeared to [Abraham] by the terebinths of Mamre’ (immediately following Abraham’s circumcision at the age of ninety-nine; Genesis 18:1) - we should visit and comfort the sick. This

important commandment acquired a special Hebrew name, *bikur holim* (visiting the sick)” (p. 510). He reminds us that it might be a good idea to ask of our actions if this is what God would want us to do and if this is a Godly way to act.

Honor your father and your mother might be the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12) but imagine if everyone was taught to treat

other people with honor and respect, and to have deep meaningful relationships. It would be quite a different world. However, “for the first time in human history, children are getting most of their information from entities whose goal is to sell them something, rather than from family, schools, or houses of worship” (de Graaf, Wann & Naylor, 2005, p. 55). That is why hooks (2000) suggests that “the only way to counter the culture of the getting is to give” (p. 160), which is in keeping with the ideas of *Hesed*.

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concept of loving-kindness asks service-learning communities to consider all the people involved in the service-learning process, not just the people interacted with and served in partnering organization but also the teacher, students, colleagues, and oneself. How do you show your *Hesed*?

## *Hesed*

חסד

### Loving-Kindness

**Perspectives:** Kindness. Caring.  
Warmth towards others.  
Unconditional friendliness.

**Metaphor:** Loving your neighbor

*“Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

- Lev 19:18

The concept of *Hitpal'ut* “wonder” is a marvelously interesting theme in Judaism. This concept is also connected to surprise and awe. According to Heschel (1955-1983), “wonder rather than doubt is the root of knowledge” (p. 11) and Miller (1992) adds that “awe is possible only because we can be aware of what is beyond us *as* beyond us” (p. 188). Heschel & Rothschild (1959) continue, “As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living” (p. 41). I could not agree more – wonder is missing!

In Hebrew, verbs are conjugated to reflect their tense and mood, giving an inherent voice. The root of the Hebrew word for *wonder* is based on the reflexive structure of the verb – meaning an action directed at oneself. In this case, *Hitpal'ut* literally means surprising oneself with wonder. People today

seem incapable of wonder, awe, or surprise, despite the overuse of the term “awesome” which used to mean *filled with awe*.

Heschel (1951 -1993) understood this. A recurring theme is the radical amazement that people feel when experiencing the presence of the Divine. “Radical amazement is a wider scope than any act of man. While any act of perception or cognition has as its object a selected segment of reality, radical amazement refers to all of reality; not only what we see, but also to the very act of seeing as well as to our own selves, to the selves that see and are amazed at their ability to see” (p. 13).

Yet, according to Miller (1992), wonder is caused by the rupture of one’s worldview. Questioning, listening, and being willing to change one’s viewpoint, is a type of death, a type of rupture, which brings in wonder and awe. It is very difficult to let go of old ideas, feelings and actions. There is danger in the unknown. “Wonder and horror can thus be viewed as anticipations of this speechless awe which is at the same time more upsetting than any other dread, and more powerful than any other ec-stasis. In this sense, all of our experiences lead us to intimidations of being itself as the ultimately sacred, the absolute Other” (p. 187-8).

In essence, Miller agrees with Heschel that “Wonder it inspires us, horror it devastates us; but only awe can radically humble us” (p. 189-90). Perhaps that is why there is wonder (and pleasure) in learning. hooks (1994) writes that “learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains the location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of

ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom” (p. 207).

Service-Learning perspective. The Jewish concepts of surprise, wonder, and awe are motivating actions for being in relationship with other people, for learning, for opening perspectives and new outlooks. Being open, humble, and compassionate via service-learning methods provides chances to glimpse “awesome” moments of wonder and surprise in a process that can connect and transform the *Other* as well as the *Self*.

## *Hitpal'ut*

התפלאות

## Wonder & Surprise

**Perspectives:** Wonderment.  
Awesome. Radical Amazement

**Metaphor:** Rainbow

And they shall be upon you for a sign and  
for a wonder, and upon your seed forever.  
- Deuteronomy 28:46

The concepts of *Simḥa* (joy), *B'diḥut* (humor), *Tz'hok* (laughter) and *Tikvah* (hope) are entwined coping skills in Judaism. Humor is the root, joy is the stalk, and hope is the delicate flower. It is in the very act of being able to keep one's sense of humor in dark and difficult circumstances that one is able to view situations from different perspectives. In the Torah, Isaac comes from the Hebrew root (tz-ḥ-k) of "laugh" - Sarah gave birth to him when she was post-menopausal. Humor is a Jewish way of knowing and doing that retains joy and hope, and has "an uncanny ability to express truths that sociological or other academic studies usually miss" (Telushkin, 1992, p. 15).

Lerner (1994) agrees, "The voices of God can be found in those parts of Jewish tradition – Torah; Midrash; the stories; the Halakha; the humor; the way of being human in the world –that tend to lead you to believe that the world can be changed from one dominated by pain, oppression, patriarchy, and evil to one in which human beings can live together in love and justice" (p. 95).

Sacks (2005) adds that "joy is the happiness we share and that his greatest achievement in life has been as an agent of hope" (p. 270). West (2004), reflecting on the apparent hopelessness of our postmodern world, writes that "we need a bloodstained Socratic love and tear-soaked prophetic love fueled by a hard-won tragicomic hope" (p. 216). He continues that "the tragicomic is the ability to laugh and retain a sense of life's joy – to preserve hope even while staring in the face of hate and hypocrisy – as against falling into the nihilism of paralyzing despair" (p. 16). West identifies Jazz as the personification of this tragicomic

hope in modern times. One could say the same of Klezmer music, a type of Jewish Jazz, where joy and sorrow are mixed with humor and hope. Hope gives energy to life; hopeless sucks life away. That is why those in the *Hasidic* movement believe it is a great *mitzvah* to be full of joy.

Lerner (1994) also articulates the importance of humor and play, which are so central to a rich spiritual life and provides perspective. He adds that "Jewish renewal must constantly seek ways to enhance joy in our lives, recognizing that through joy, humor, and play we are likely to make a ourselves ever more deeply open to God's energy" (p. 108) and to others.

Humor is found precisely because of our diversity. The story goes that "A rabbi, after listening to the complaint of one neighbor against another, says, 'You are right.' After listening carefully to the second neighbor, the rabbi nods and also says, 'You are right.' 'But,' said the wife, 'they can't both be

right.' Thoughtfully, the rabbi considers his wife's words. 'You know,' he said finally, 'you are right, too'" (Cone, 1989, p. xiii). Humor helps us identify the many perspectives that continually surround us, and helps us move towards action. Fishman & McCarthy (2007) identified "one reason for maintaining a life of hope – pragmatic reason- ...it gets people to take action they might not otherwise undertake" (p. 10). Freire (2001) says "hope is a natural, possible, and necessary impetus in the context of our unfinishedness" (p. 69).

Service-Learning perspective: The Jewish concepts of joy, humor and hope are needed in the practice of service-learning. For without hope, there would be no reason to be of service, or to learn -"actions" which can make huge differences in the world.

### *Simḥa, Tz'hok & Tikvah*

שמחה, צחוק, תקווה

### **Joy, Laughter, & Hope**

**Perspectives:** Tragicomic Hope. Faith.  
Courage. Joy.

**Metaphor:** Laughter through tears

*"Sarah said, 'God has brought me laughter, so that all who hear will laugh with me.'"* - Genesis 21:6

The concept of *Zikaron* (memory) is a powerful reminder in Judaism to remember all the precepts previously listed in this chapter. It reminds us that history is indeed important. The famous line of Santayana about “those who forget history are doomed to repeat it” is not just a saying. Memory is intense. Jewish people remember what it was like to be slaves in Egypt so that they never enslave anyone. They remember to ask for forgiveness at least every Yom Kippur, remember to keep the Sabbath and keep it holy, and remember departed loved ones with a ritual called *Yahrzeit* on the anniversary of their death. Jews remember the way, and remember to remember.

Cone (1989) adds that we Jews are a community based on memory. It is the “memory that gives you shoulders to stand on – that helps you to see beyond your own personal view. Some call this kind of memory ‘a community of memory.’ Buber called it ‘collective memory’...It is every Jew’s inheritance” (p. 5).

Without memory, there is no chance of hope. Beliak (in Shapiro, 1999), writes that the “act of memory” (p. 60) can bring order out of chaos but can also be distorted. Judith Plaskow (1990) reminds us that “a ‘hermeneutics of remembrance’ says that the same sources that are regarded with suspicion can also be used to reconstruct Jewish women’s history.... Read with new questions and critical freedom, traditional sources can yield ‘subversive memories’ of past struggles for liberation within and against patriarchy, memories that link contemporary women to a transformative history” (p. 15).

Memory shapes us, “for the central events of the Jewish past are not simply history but living, active memory that continues to shape a Jewish identity and self-understanding. In Judaism, memory is not simply a given but a religious obligation incumbent on both Israel and God” (Plaskow, 1990, p. 29).

Dewey (1997) explains, “The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p. 35). That is how memory shapes us. Cone (1989) in writing about Jewish people wanting to repairing the world states that “they have always had the feeling, without its ever being said, that they should help make this world a better place. These are attitudes handed down through the collective memory” (p. 6).

In memory is learning and knowing, and in learning and knowing is memory. “Collective memory arises in the sustained co-activity of agents... Knowledge and memory are complementary notions” (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler. 2008, p. 63-65). Hook (1994) also reminds us that “often experience enters the classroom from the location of memory. Usually narratives of experience are told retrospectively” (p. 91).

**Service-Learning perspective:** Memory informs service-learners with a type of “muscle memory” of experienced service and learning that replicates itself through repetitions of doing and redoing which inform, embody, embed, and transform understanding. Memory is a journey and a destination that feeds off itself as actions are united with previous memories and the learning they provided.

### *Zikaron* זִכְרוֹן **Memory**

**Perspectives:** Remembrance.  
Remember. Record. Memorial.

**Metaphor:** Collective memory

*“And Moses said to the people,  
‘Remember this day, on which you went  
free from Egypt, the house of bondage,  
how the Lord freed you from it with the  
mighty hand.’”*

- Exodus 13:3

In Judaism, most *rituals* have a physical component as well as an intellectual element. Wrapping oneself in a *tallit* (prayer shawl) is at first a tactile and sensory act followed by cognitive, thoughtful prayer. Judaism also has a service-orientation, as is seen by the performance of *tzedakah*, sometimes translated as charity but much more than just charity and justice as previously explained. The *tzedakah* of putting coins, for instance, into a vessel to be later donated to charity makes no sense on the surface. Should not one wait until the spirit of generosity moves one to donate?

Or could it be that the *experiential* action of making a weekly deposit of coins before Shabbat, as many Jewish people do, moves a person to the knowledge and feeling of generosity and service? The reason why Maimonides, et al., (1976) stated we are obligated to perform these acts of *tzedakah* is that feelings, service, and learning will proceed from the experience. Russell (1999) writes that “no fact concerning anything capable of being experienced can be known independently of experience” (p. 76), which means that we can only truly know by experience. The question as to whether service-learning is a mandatory deed or voluntary act is a moot point. Within the act of service-learning, as in Judaism, the mandatory *experience* leads to the voluntary *experience*.

Although some people refer to the Jewish people as *people of the book* (cognitive), Jews should be labeled as *people of the deed* (embodied action and service). Experience first. In another example of experience first, one of the highest *mitzvot* (commandments) is in writing a scroll of the Torah (Deut. 31:19) not just studying the Torah. The doing is first, followed by the reading and studying, followed by the reflection and understanding. This is also the basis for service-learning – a process for

experiencing first, serving, reading and studying, critically reflecting and understanding, and then repeating the process.

How important is this traditional narrative to education in contemporary culture? Extremely! The process of the service-experience (experiential learning), followed by information (social and book learning), followed by critical reflection (mind/body integrative learning), creates the end product of what education should really encapsulate – compassionately embodied knowledge and action. Some might label this embodied knowledge as wisdom. Wisdom, though, is not a static development. It is a dynamic, lifelong process and a continuous progression of experience, service, information, and reflection. In service-learning, just as in Judaism, we act before we fully comprehend. In this reversal of the usual American education in which cognitive facts are, as Freire (1970/2000) put it, “banked” and deposited into students’ brains, to be withdrawn during periods of testing, the experiential aspect integrates the information and reflection and transforms it.

In this constant *struggle*, the best and most enduring learning transpires – a lifelong process of questioning in the midst of ambiguity. Learning facts and passing tests is neither education nor knowledge. Nor is it capable of perpetuation. Traditional American education could *service-learn* a few things from this model. We all have our Mount Sinai moments... standing on the brink of a possible transformative experience. As Green (2010) reminds us, universal questions of who we are, why we are here, and what it means to be human being are “too great for us to allow ourselves to consider them *only as Jews*” (p. 120). Judaism has much to offer the world.

I would like to share what Judaism has to offer, especially in a multicultural post-modern climate. However, despite its claim of inclusiveness, “multiculturalism has typically not included Jews” (Langman, 1999, p.2). This bold statement was the beginning of an understanding that the greater society, as well as Jews themselves, do not see Jews and Judaism as fitting into the broad pre-existing categories and labels reserved for minority groups. According to Langman (1999), this is because non-Jews see Jews as an assimilated non-minority, as economically privileged, as part of the white majority, as members of a religion, and not as an oppressed group (because they lack knowledge, or experience, of Jewish oppression) (pp. 4 -10). Could this be another case of racism without racists (Bonilla-Silva, 2006)?

Jews, on the other hand, have not included themselves in multicultural issues since they often separate their Jewishness from professional identities, invalidate their Jewish experiences, fear visibility as Jews, internalize anti-Semitism or possess Jewish self-hatred (Langman, pp. 10-14). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the reasons for this lack of perceived value for Jewish ideas and concepts. However, I want to point out that the exclusion of Jewish contributions from epistemology, education, social justice, and other fields is a correctable action. Part of this study and especially this chapter was to highlight values and pathways that may be of service to education, service-learning, and indeed the world. I support the idea that multiculturalism welcomes the epistemology, values, and beliefs of many diverse peoples and communities. It is now time for Jewish epistemology, values, and beliefs to be included

in those ranks. For Judaism, knowing is a matter of doing. The experiential and active is the basis for all knowledge.

It is within those habits and experiences of seeking justice and listening with compassion, questioning and struggling and taking time to reflect, helping the stranger and the oppressed, retaining humor and hope, being grateful and awe struck by the creativity and diversity of humanity, empowering the powerless, imagining and experiencing redemptive possibilities, engaging in hospitable relationships and connected community, demonstrating responsibility and obligation with justice and compassion, enacting social and political activism, expressing embodied memory of self and others, and striving for *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) that the experience and knowledge of transcendence and transformation occur. It is an education of experiences that build character, and as Buber (1997/2006) reminds us, an “education worthy of the name is essentially education of character” (p. 123). Jewish values and ways of knowing might be different from mainstream America and therefore devalued, but hooks (2000) reminds us that “in a culture where money is the measure of value, where it is believed that everything and everyone can be bought, it is difficult to sustain different values” (p. 47).

I propose that we need these socially-just and action-oriented Jewish values and ways of knowing to help counteract hegemonic behaviors, thoughts, and feelings of many Eurocentric epistemologies and Western philosophies. However, I am not addicted to these ways of knowing to the exclusion of other ways of knowing and learning (Hudak & Kihn, 2001, p. 251), I just wish to have it considered and placed with other ways of knowing and values within the economic, political, social, educational, and moral fabric



of our communities. And I wish to also re-introduce these values and methods to the Jewish community, since I believe that many contemporary and post-modern Jews have forgotten, never learned these ways of knowing, or have no experience living these concepts that are part of a long tradition.

### **A Long History of Service and Action-Oriented Values**

For Judaism, experience is not a just matter of knowing but a matter of doing, in order to know. Around 1905, John Dewey was developing the intellectual foundations for service-based learning; therefore, the experiential education movement has been active for about a hundred years. The term *service-learning* was not even used until 1966 and was not a formed concept until 1990 (Learn and Serve America - <http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning>); therefore, the service-learning movement has been active for less than fifty years. In approximately 1280 B.C.E., Moses and the Israelite people were leaving slavery and receiving the Torah. These experiential ways of knowing has been active and perfecting themselves for 3293 years! It is a continual process.

The same can be said for service-learning. "Service-learning is a continual process. To the extent it becomes institutionalized and you begin to evaluate it and encapsulate it in any formal structure, you begin to limits its capacity" (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, p.171). Both Judaism and the service-learning movement will continue to evolve. So will the values and pathways which sustain them. The early service-learning pioneers relied on "transcendent hope," (p. 179) not optimism, for sustenance, and were able to evolve while simultaneously struggling with the diverse ideas and languages of

different disciplines that made it “hard for them to talk to each other” (p. 214). Judaism can add and join its ideas and language with the service-learning community. “Service-learning requires acquisition of and reflection on knowledge not readily found in the academy” (p. 219) and can find ways to diversify the field and make it more inclusive (p. 229). Service-Learning, in its best theoretical framework and most promising practical implementations is about bringing out the finest *education* and learning within a mutually supportive, engaging, respectful, awe-inspiring, open-minded, logical yet emotionally loving, consciously-lived, humble, hopeful, wonder-full, democratically benevolent, critically reflective and expressed, dialogic, and dialectic relationship. That’s a tall order. Anyone of these characteristics is often difficult to achieve, let alone all of them in concert. According to Scheffler (1995):

Moses, who received the text of the written Torah, did not understand the depth of the interpretations and inferences built upon it. In some sense, all these inferences are embodied in the text, but they are not accessible to anyone at any given time, no matter how wise or learned. Only the historical process of continuing dialectic discussion can draw them forth. Such discussion is, in effect, an instrument of perception, revealing what is hidden in the text, in a piecemeal and continuing process in historical time. (p. 184)

Although the Jewish people represent about one percent of the world’s population, the Jewish people have been active in transforming the *doing/ knowing* of science, the arts, social justice movement (such as civil rights), charities, and community. Service-learning is one of those experiential models that show great promise in transforming our educational systems, our schools, and our society into compassionate and critically-conscious communities. Experiential, dialogic, dialectic, inclusive, and

critical-reflective paradigms in education can create the *struggling* and *humbling* that produces *learning* capable of transforming self and communities. Telushkin (2000) reminds us that:

If you seldom hear, read, or listen to views that oppose your own, and if almost everyone you talk to sees the world just as you do, your thinking will grow flabby and intolerant. This is often the case with ideologues on the right and left, both in religion and in politics. As this teaches us, humble people are not only more pleasant human beings, but in the final analysis they may well be the only ones who will have something eternally important to teach. (p. 187)

My hope is that we all continue to learn from each other as we broaden our perspectives through the dialogic and dialectic.

### **Summary**

One does not need to understand before one can *do* and experience. These values and ways of knowing couple the experiential with the struggle and questioning that can lead to deeper understanding and knowledge - informing education in our contemporary culture. Waskow (1978) claims that his “deepest learning was precisely the process of wrestling itself, not particular conclusions” (p. 12). Or, as Green (2006) reminds us, “our quest is not a question, one that would require a specific *answer*. But the quest itself leads us to an act of *affirmation*...Our ‘yes’ is an affirmation of the questing process, but even more, it is an affirmation of life itself” (pp. xxiii-xxiv).

Let us affirm to become more *engaged* in expanding lifelong models of service-learning to greater populations, both traditional and nontraditional, as a way of better questioning, understanding, and transforming our educational practices and our present-day ethos. This will be the purpose of the *Project*. However, one does not have to be

Jewish, mature, or an adult to participate in, or grow from, this service-learning experience. As it is written in Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Ancestors), “those whose actions exceed their wisdom, that wisdom will endure; those whose wisdom exceeds actions, that wisdom will not endure” (3:12).

In the next chapter, we will explore how the *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning Project* was designed and constructed from these Jewish epistemologies and values as well as from concepts derived from the fields of adult education, lifelong learning theory and practice, volunteerism, and service-learning. It will elaborate how the *Project* was implemented, who participated in it, and what methods were used to study and evaluate the design.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **METHODS AND PROCESSES**

Rabbi Moshe Leib said: “A human being who has not a single hour for his own every day is no human being.” (Buber, 1948/1969, p. 92)

In this chapter we explore the methods and processes used to create, implement, and study the *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning Project* model. These processes include how and when the *Project* was set up, who participated in it, how it was studied, and how the data were collected and examined. It shows how the model was created and applied, what barriers were encountered, and what changes occurred to the model during execution of the *Project*. What I hope to convey is how much pleasure and fun was involved in the process as well as how much serious scholarship and learning was involved by following this particular pathway. Therefore, each section will have a (mostly) humorous quote from *Project* participants that frames that particular section.

#### **Formulation and Formation of the Project Model**

We’re guinea pigs?!? Is that kosher? (*Project* participant)

As previously noted, the genesis of the model of this study progressed from the theories and practices of adult education, lifelong-learning, volunteerism/ service, service-learning, and Jewish ways of knowing within an interwoven framework. Included in this framework were the writings and interpretations of secular and Jewish

philosophers, educators, and practitioners. As highlighted in previous chapters, within this *Project* model I wanted to include a loose framework of *progressive, social justice and action-oriented, learning and learner-centered, problem-based, personal development, integrated, experiential and cooperative educational, and secular and Jewish philosophical theories and practices*. These formed the bases of the model which were merged with the recurrent themes of Judaism (from Chapter III), and a service-learning approach. The learners, who were all over the age of fifty years, provided needed service at organizations, attended classroom sessions to bring in Jewish ways of knowing and values that tied back to their service experiences, participated in deep and critical discussions and reflections, and formed connections to their service, learning, and lives. I believed that such a program could be viable.

Knowledge is a complex subject. The idea of what constitutes learning and knowledge is a debate that rages within each individual, within groups, within communities, within organizations, and within society. I personally believe that older service-adult learners, can, through their vast life experiences, have the capacity to view and understand multiple *knowledges*, and that is what drove me to this research. From this belief, I felt that these older adults might understand that mature adult service-learning is itself a postmodern social construct (an alternative viewpoint differing from previous ways of thinking that focused on only one truth) for service and/or learning. The *Project* encapsulated a new and different way of learning than many older people or educators have experienced. Purpel (1989) reminds us, for instance, that the *Tyler* rational (using goals and objectives that are teacher-identified, not learner-identified) in

the education profession is “the most dramatic instance of cultural/professional hegemony in the field. It seems literally inconceivable to most educators to conceptualize education in any other way!” (p. 49). I wanted to move beyond these rigid and outdated models that put *teacher’s* goals and objectives ahead of the *learner’s* needs. I wanted to extract the learning and knowing that is in each unique individual person, and in the collective personhood.

### **Limited Models for Secular and Jewish Older Adult Service-Learning**

Mature adult service-learning? I’m not so sure about the *mature* part! (*Project* participant)

Even if I found or wanted to utilize a pre-existing or ready-made educational model for this *Project*, I could not do so since they did not exist. There is a lack of service-learning models for older people. There is a lack of Jewish service-learning models for older people. There is a lack of focus on older learners’ prior experience as an educational tool. There is a lack of broad perspectives on aging as increasing processing through connections. There is a lack of research for understanding the educational needs of older people. There is a lack of ability for older people to access institutions of higher education. There is a lack of language to use or describe such educational models. There is a lack of faith-based perspectives in learning and service. As mentioned previously, although there are many principles, curricula and programs specifically for adult learners, there is a lack of principles, curricula, and programs for older adult service-learners. Additionally, although there are many concepts, syllabi and courses expressly created for Jewish adult education there is a lack of Jewish adult service-learning education. With

all these *lacks* in mind, I created my own *Project*, bringing together all the theories, ideas, and practices previously mentioned to form a concrete model for implementation.

Therefore, the *Project* journey started with laying down the tracks of a service-learning foundation and paving with adult education, lifelong-learning, volunteerism/ service, service-learning, and Jewish values and ways of knowing. This became the *way* of conceptualizing the framework – an open type of module with minimal structure - to allow for flexibility, and creativity from both the researcher and the participants. This could help liberate the learner and the facilitator/ learner, and especially the learning, from prior constraints, so that “education might be recast, not so much as helping people to know what they don't know, but as noticing what they haven't noticed” (Davis et al., 2008, p. 35). In essence, the model developed into a feedback loop that could sustain itself for long periods of time. As such, the *Project* consisted of the participants learning and exploring on a type of service-learning vehicle through various Jewish texts revolving around Jewish themes and concepts (such as compassion, gratitude, liberation, and listening, etc.), run through the prism of their service experiences, connected by self- and critical-reflection, and repeated to uncover and transform each session.

### **Creating the Multi-Interpretive Journey Blueprint**

We're on a journey? What kind of car are we taking? Can I drive? How fast?  
(*Project* participant)

This new idea, a postmodern social construction of a Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning *Project*, is that service and learning occur within and between the experiences of the learner and the knowledge(s) presented. However, since “curriculum



planning can be no more based on a single theory than can other complex decisions such as choosing a spouse, buying a car, or selecting a president” (Posner, 1998, p. 86), I followed an *eclectic* approach (Schwab 1970), as hinted at above.

That is the reason I utilized the term *Project* instead of curriculum for this study model. This eclectic *Project* is based on interactions between foundational and conceptual elements (including Eisler’s *caring community*, Buber’s *reciprocal dialogic*, Purpel’s *moral and ethical compass in education*, Lerner’s *Left hand of God*, Dewey’s *experiential education*, Heschel’s *praying with one’s feet*, Greene’s *liberatory education*, Freire’s *anti-banking method of education*, Giroux’s *institutions of power*, and Knowles *self-directed learning*) previously discussed in Chapter II. These philosophical, educational, sociological, cultural, foundational, and curricular theories and practices gather diverse viewpoints and orientations into the *Project*, framing it as metaphorical (Anijar & Casey, 1997; Huebner, 1984), as identity and labeling (Pinar, 1998; Shapiro, 1999; Hudak & Kihn, 2001; Casey, 1990), as hidden or unseen (Anyon, 1980; Vallance, 1973/4), as civically- engaged (Freedland & Lieberman, 2010), as viewed through culture or alternative cultures (Joseph, 2000; Kharen, 2000; Kleibard & Herbert, 1987; Villaverde, 2008; Naples, 2003), as political (Beyer & Apple, 1998), as integrative or interdisciplinary (Savage, Chen & Vanasupa, 2007; Erickson, 2002), as post-modern (Slattery, 2006), as oriented through social change praxis (Casey, 1993), as moral or spiritual (Purpel, 1989; Purpel, 2004; Purpel, 1999/2005; Purpel & Ryan, 1976; Shapiro, 1989; West, 2004), and as transformative (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000).

For instance, I looked to feminist perspectives to inform this *Project*. From a multidimensional materialistic standpoint, feminism:

incorporates important insights of postmodern analyses of power, subjectivity, and language as a powerful framework for exploring the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, region, and culture in different geographic and historical contexts. (Naples, 2003, p. 7)

as it also incorporates reflective practice and the use of oral narratives. Feminist scholars look at the invisible and marginalized, especially within women's lived experiences of being the *Other*, are sensitive to the dynamics of power and domination, explores issues of embodiment and empowerment, seek community and relational achievement, and struggle for social and economic justice through activism. Jewish people, as are older *mature* people, are often invisible or marginalized and I wanted to bring into the *Project* these feminist understandings to explore power issues, embodiment of learning, reflective practices, historical perspectives, language, subjectivity, culture, struggle and activism. The concept of subjectivity will be explained further later in the chapter.

I also learned the notion of questioning *normalcy* from Feminism (Naples, 2003), and Queer theory (Shlasko, 2005), as well as from Judaism, whose ideas stand in contrast with *mainstream* positions regarding what is considered normal. After all, I saw that education could be framed as “expanding the space of the possible” (Davis et al., 2008, p. 20) and that expanding space requires choices and possibilities. Since “there's no such thing as a *neutral* educational process” (Greene, 1981, p. 386), I wanted my beliefs, practices, and thoughts, as well as those of the authors and scholars noted in Chapter II, those of Jewish values and ways of knowing noted in Chapter III, and those of my

learners, to be interwoven and expressed in this *Project*, in order to express new, alternative, creative, innovative, and transformative philosophies and practices.

The *Project* was concretized to include adult service-learners over the age of 50 (people with life experiences who were in transition periods of life), providing service in an agency that helps meet the needs of the community (feeling useful and productive), while reflecting on their service (continuing to learn), and attending semi-structured learning and discussion sessions, titled *gatherings* (continuing to socialize, be in the world, and grow as people). The choice of the word *gatherings* was used on purpose. It was to dispel the idea of classroom as the only place of learning. Rogers (1971/2001) reminds us that many adults feel negative about learning something new from their disappointments and negative memories of being in school, where education was “ritual humiliation” (p. 9). Using the word *gatherings* was an attempt to find alternative terms for *classroom*, *schooling*, or *education* that do not convey or transfer hegemonic structures, arrangements, or baggage (including personal baggage and conflicts from childhood experiences and memories). My intention was to distance this *Project* from any preconceived notions, fears, passivity or dependency issues related to *schooling*.

### **Research and Learning Setting**

Wait ‘til I tell my grandchildren that I’m also in school! (*Project* participant)

As mentioned in chapter II, most service-learning arrangements are housed at *traditional* educational institutions (such as universities or high schools) which partner with community (usually non-profit) organizations. However, most of the older people I

know have neither the access, nor the desire, to attend a university. For instance, only 1.03 percent of those who enrolled in service-learning courses from Fall 2009 to Summer 2012 at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), were over the age of 50 (K. Rowett-James, UNCG Office of the Institutional Research & C. Hamilton, UNCG Office of Leadership and Service-Learning, personal communications, November 30, 2012). Implementing and housing this *Project* in a Type III quasi-educational (see Chapter I) organization, a community organization that is not a *traditional* educational organization, provides older people better access to educational opportunities and possibilities. That is how this *Project* became housed at *The Agency*, which already had a large community of volunteers, partnerships with other area agencies and nonprofit organizations, an aging population that demanded more than rocking on the porch at retirement, and an incredibly active, supportive, and vibrant Jewish community with a long history of civic participation and pride. Of course this new configuration of service-learning in a social service agency as educational establishment is based in part on the long tradition of Jewish family education in Jewish religious, social, and service institutions.

Since this *Project* was set up to deliver this service-learning opportunity to older adults in a non-traditional educational setting, the research environment became the same setting as the *Project*, located at *The Agency*. I wanted to be very careful about differentiating my regular agency duties from my research agenda and also from my personal life.

Based on the theory, practice, and research, I decided that each *gathering* would consist of four separate parts layered on top of each part and cyclical in nature to become a loose framework in keeping with the open, flexible, and postmodern *Project* that I imagined.

### **The Parts of the Project**

Part one would begin with participants sharing their *service* experiences, creating an atmosphere of diversity in providing service, and exposing the participants to other populations and ways of service. This would also allow the participants to get to know each other better. Emphasis would also be on exploration of societal issues, community need, and problem-solving, using the learning from past *gatherings* to scaffold subsequent learning and to build the community of learners. Retirement can open opportunities for searching, exploration, and growth. Therefore:

students must be given the opportunity to learn how to use and interpret their own experiences in a manner that reveals how the latter have been shaped and influenced by the dominant culture. Subjective awareness becomes the first step in transforming those experiences. (Giroux, 1980, in Pinar, 1999, p. 19)

I felt that part two of the *Project* model would revolve around a particular social-action-oriented Jewish value and way of knowing (as outlined in Chapter III). For instance, with the *gratitude* theme, the experiential portion consisted of participants sharing something for which they were grateful, enacting their gratitude. After the exercise, there was discussion based on noted similarities and differences, patterns and omissions, and webs of connection. Taking into consideration the Jewish idea of *Hevruta*, or dyad learning, as well as Dewey's emphasis on experiential education and

activities, the action-oriented embodied aspect of education was important for the *Project*. The themes for text study were based on the themes outlined in the previous chapter. Moreover, since there were over thirty-six Jewish themes identified in the last chapter (more are discovered each month of the *Project*), there would be more than enough material for at least three years' worth of monthly gatherings. With creativity and access to educational resources, there are a plethora of experiential activities, critical questions, and prompts to include and explore. In this part two were experiential activities performed in *Hevruta* (dyad/ pairs) style and then as a group. Thereafter, a Jewish text was introduced to give the theme added weight, structure, agency, and embodiment.

These Jewish texts encompassed anything written down that has a Jewish essence to it, be it explicitly or implicitly, such a Jewish prayer, traditional Jewish texts, contemporary Jewish texts, and non-traditional Jewish texts such as philosophies that might be inspired by Jewish values and traditions. Ancient prayers are found in every Jewish denominational *Siddur* (the Jewish prayer book). In addition, biblical texts may provide, even for secular persons, material of interest, mystery, intrigue, and paradoxically, comfort.

For the third part of each *gathering*, questions would lead the discussions and reflective so that participants could run the featured theme through the prism of their own service, through the prism of society, and through the prism of their own lives. This critical reflection, I believe, is the hallmark of both Judaism and of service-learning, and is significance.

The fourth part of this *Project* is the closing and summation of the session, involving explanation of homework exercises, usually to continue reflection. These include critical reflection on their learning and service via prompts for journaling, e-mail and other written correspondences. The reflection continued throughout the process, including during service activities and during non-*gathering* times, contributing to subsequent group discussions and reflective inquiry. The participants would continue providing service at the various Jewish and non-Jewish community and non-profit agencies in which they previously or currently volunteered, seeking to thoughtfully and systematically address authentic community need with the help of their agency personnel and the community.

Each module/ session/ *gathering* would be self-contained, and participants could attend gatherings at any time in the cycle and still understand what was occurring. Additionally, since this *Project* also used the four major learning modalities, visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinesthetic (movement), and tactile (hands-on) and learning through multiple modalities (Tate, 2004, p. xxv), the *Project* would be an embodied experience, which also increased potential for learning, reflection, and transformation.

The evolution of this model took approximately six months to complete, since I discussed it with not only my committee members but also with my supervisor at work, my spouse, my friends, my fellow students, my clergy, and even my volunteers prior to inviting them into the study. There are many ways this model could be facilitated. However, the skills and personality of the facilitator are factors in the equation. The facilitator needs to be willing to ask (critical) questions, listen in a non-judgmental and

respectful manner, be open to new ways of thinking and looking at the world, and encourage the same of the participants. Nevertheless, this model would be nothing without the overall connections, sense of curiosity, and respectful attitudes of the participants in making these *gatherings* into an open, multiple-perspective, and safe space (hooks, 1994; Greene, 1981; Jackson, 2010).

To help the reader have an idea of what the model for this *Project* looked like, here is one lesson based on the framework (as explored and explained above). The underlined parts are from the *Project* configuration as listed above. This lesson is based on the Jewish theme of *Tzedakah* – Justice (which can also be translated as Charity).

## **Gathering # 2. Topic: *Tzedakah* (justice and charity)**

### **Goals:**

1. To become oriented with additional Jewish ways of knowing
2. To become further involved in service-learning modalities
3. To begin the process of critical reflection and critical self-reflection techniques
4. To become aware of the power of *Tzedakah* (justice and charity)

### **Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name and explain two Jewish ways of knowing
2. Participants will be able to identify the difference between volunteerism and service-learning.
3. Participants will identify for the group the community need they are fulfilling within the Project.
4. Participants will demonstrate use of the three types of reflection identified by Kath Fisher in her handout, and by the 3<sup>rd</sup> session show that they are capable of utilizing critical reflection techniques (within their journals, e-mails, and discussions).
5. Participants will broaden their uses of *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude) in actions at home, at gatherings, and at service project.

### **Process and Content:**

#### **1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes)**

- Go around circle and ask participants to share previous week's service-projects through the lens of last week's way of knowing – gratitude. Share journal writings and thoughts.



- Questions for discussions include: What did you notice about your gratitude style? How do you show your gratitude at your service-project? Is it the same or different than how you show gratitude to your family and friends? Why do you think that is?

## 2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)

- Introduction of the topic of justice. Write their ideas on giant post notes on wall from the questions asked. Some questions to ask the participants: What do you think justice is? Do you think it is the same in English/ America and in Judaism? Why or why not? Do you know the Hebrew word for justice? How do you know when someone is acting just – or when you are acting just? Are justice and charity the same thing?
- **Hevruta and group experiences.** (Preparation: Take Rambam's 8 levels of tzedakah below and format larger, with spaces in between lines, remove the numbers in front of each statement - and change #1 to start with "When helping sustain.", - cut them into strips, and place each set in its own plastic bag). Give each dyad (*hevruta* group) a plastic bag with the cut statements in it and ask participants to place these statements in the order they think they should appear (lowest to highest). Then have the groups come together to "decide" what the rank order should be – a consensus. (After the experience, the list below would be circulated to participants in its entirety.)
  - **Rambam organized the different levels of tzedakah (and charity) into a list from the least to the most honorable.**
    1. The highest form of *tzedakah* is to help sustain a person before they become impoverished by offering a substantial gift in a dignified manner, or by extending a suitable loan, or by helping them find employment, or by establishing them in business so as to make it unnecessary for them to become dependent on others or to ask for assistance. When donations are given grudgingly, with pain, or unhappily.
    2. When the donor and recipient do not know each other - their actions or their circumstances.
    3. When the donor knows the recipient's identity, but the receiver is unaware of the source.
    4. When the recipient is aware of the giver's identity, but the donor does not know the identity of the person receiving the tzedakah.
    5. When one gives directly to the poor without being asked or solicited.
    6. When one gives directly to the poor upon being asked or solicited.
    7. When one gives less than one should, but does so cheerfully.
    8. When donations are given grudgingly.

(*Mishnah Torah, Laws of Gifts to Poor People, 10:7-14*), Explain that Maimonides, often called by his acronym RaMBaM (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon), was a 12th century Jewish scholar and physician. Rambam wrote a code of Jewish law, the *Mishnah Torah*, based on the Rabbinic oral tradition.
- **Text:** "Justice, justice, shall you pursue." – Deuteronomy 16:20.

## 3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)

- Questions: Why did you choose the ranking that you did? Did anyone else's argument convince you to change your mind? Why or why not? What beliefs do you hold that made you choose that order? Do you think other people would agree with you or with Maimonides' interpretations? Why do you think the word "Justice" is repeated? What is

the difference between Justice and Charity - how are they similar? Give examples from your life. Do you agree with Rambam's ranking? Why or why not? How do you think you show justice at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of justice in society or about your enactment of justice towards them?

**4. Summary of session and homework.** (15 minutes)

- Review the concept of Justice and Rambam's 8 levels.
- Review the text of "Justice, justice shall you seek."
- Review homework assignment. Observe and journal about how you show justice (or charity) at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact justice. When you are watching the news, how is the word justice used? How have you used the word in your life? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing justice?
- Confirm date and time of next *gathering*.
- Returning to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning
- Then the cycle repeats itself and continues.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying justice and charity affected their service, their life and home, and their community. Does it change how they viewed the Jewish ways of knowing of justice, charity, and gratitude (previous explored Jewish ways of knowing)?

I provide more lesson modules in Appendix C. After creating this *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning* model, the next step became determining the techniques of studying it. A "rich, thick description" (Litchman, 2013) of what occurred during these *gatherings* is presented in the next chapter.

**Research Methodology - Action Research**

It's a study within a study? Sounds a little like *a dream within a dream*. What would Shakespeare and Poe say? (*Project* participant)

Since I wanted to see *HOW* the *Project* worked and improve it as I went along, as well as including the participants as co-researchers in the study, I knew I needed a qualitative (the subjective process of understanding, interpreting, and making meaning

from social interactions), not quantitative study (testing hypotheses and making *objective* and impersonal statistical predictions) research study model. I also discovered that there are some methods that are best recommended and utilized when studying the field of service-learning. With the help and guidance of my dissertation committee, we chose the *qualitatively applied* research method of *action research*.

*Qualitative research* is about the process, meaning, and understanding of the research. *Qualitative researchers* are interested in understanding the way we create meaning from our experiences in the world (Merriam, 2009; Lichtman, 2013), and that is what I sought - *to discover and understand meaning through Jewish older adult service-learning*. *Applied research* attempts to *apply* what we learned from our research to improve practice, which is what I sought - *to apply the principles and practices learned in my research to improve the lives of present and future participants*. *Action research*, also referred to as *participatory research*, *collaborative inquiry*, *emancipatory research*, *action learning*, and *contextual action research* is a research methods that is “*learning by doing*” (Rory, 1998; Dewey, 1997), which I sought - *to learn by doing and doing by learning*.

*Action research* is a process of making changes to improve study and practice while studying and practicing it (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993); Brock, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; McFarland & Stansell, 1993; Corey, 1953; Brighton & Moon, 2007). It is a process that is cyclical, involving a “non-linear pattern of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the changes in the social situations” (Noffke & Stevenson, 1995, p. 2). *Action research* is one of the more frequently preferred and

utilized methodologies for studying service-learning (Kelshaw, Lazarus & Minier, 2009; Kaye, 2010), since in many ways it is similar to actual service-learning practice. For instance, *action research* has:

strong ties to the model of critical reflection proposed by Dewey in 1910 in which the art of thinking closely parallels the research process by providing a structured framework for solving problems in the school or community setting. (Kelshaw et al., 2009, p. 226)

Merriam (2009) writes that:

action research has as its goal to address a specific problem in a specific setting, such as the classroom, a workplace, a program, or an organization. This kind of research often involves the participants in the research process, thus blurring the distinction between action and research. (p. 4)

This *qualitatively applied action research* modality permits one to experience and research the entire process while simultaneously improving the experience and the research. *Action research* starts with a *Plan*. This matches the part of the research study in which I take the theories and practices that together contributed to the *Project*. The second step is *Action*. This corresponds with the implementation portion of my research. The third step is *Observation*. This is the data collection portion of the research. The fourth step in *action research* step is *Reflection*. This parallels the reflective aspect of the service-learning process and is the section through which exploring, analyzing, evaluating, etc., transforms the information received so a revised plan may be created, and which starts the process over again. Since the focus of the methodology for *action research* is on PROCESS, within this research study the participants and the researcher

will be part in this cyclical process. This is how the *Project* became a study within a study. This process is a fully embodied experience that encompasses and synthesizes aspects of both service and learning which closely models service-learning modalities and methodologies (Billig & Waterman, 2003).

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

Are you recording this?!?!? By the way, how do I sound? (*Project* participant)

Data were collected via tape recordings at the regular group *gatherings* in which learning, interactions, and discussions took place with study participants. Open-ended discussion questions at the *gatherings* and journal responses to prompts became the instruments that lead to data collected from individuals (journals/ e-mails) and groups (discussions) as well as observations of and from the participants. The audio recordings of the seven gatherings were then transcribed. The first few *gatherings* were transcribed by someone other than this researcher. I found that 1) the transcriptions were taking longer to transcribe than expected, 2) the transcriber did not know the participants so she could not identify who said what and I had to go back and to figure this out and add to the transcript, 3) there were nuances that weren't captured by the transcription, 4) some of the Hebrew (and English) words were misspelled. Therefore, I began to personally transcribe all the *gatherings*. In all, there were over 10 hours of recordings of the seven *gatherings* sessions, creating over 140 pages of transcription from these *gatherings*, plus many more hours of individual and group interactions between these *gathering* sessions.

Data were also collected through participants' reflective journal entries, e-mail correspondences, and other interactions, as well as evaluations of the process and outcomes by the researcher, participants, and recipient agencies. Field notes were also taken. This accounted for another 64 pages of journals, e-mail, notes, and other correspondences. In addition, data were collected from host partnerships via follow-up phone calls and e-mails, keeping in mind the issues of privacy and confidentiality.

All data were securely stored. Digital files such as original recordings, transcriptions, e-mails, and other computer documents and correspondences were stored on my personal computer which is password protected. All papers and physical evidences were stored in a locked file cabinet at my home and I was the only one with a key. The only other people who were allowed access to the data were the transcriber and the Director of *The Agency*, who both signed confidentiality agreements. No information was kept in their possession. The participants were instructed not to discuss or disclose names or specific activities related to the other participants of the study.

The transcriptions of the discussions, as well as the other journals, e-mails and correspondences were coded, looking for common themes, phrases, and wording. I was also looking for that which was not stated or that which was overlooked. During the implementation of the *Project*, modifications needed to be made in the frequency of sessions (from weekly to monthly) and in the number and variety of volunteers (unemployed volunteers became employed and many participants missed sessions due to illness or, as in most of the cases, visiting family out of town). Only three participants

attended all seven sessions, however, all the participants claimed to enjoy and benefit from the *Project*.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Is that what you meant? I saw I differently - it could also mean... (*Project* participant)

Just as the data were collected throughout the study, and used to make subsequent sessions better, the analyses of the data occurred throughout the process. This was done by reviewing and listening numerous times to the tapes of the *gatherings*, by transcribing in detail the conversations and discussions that occurred at the *gatherings*, by frequently re-reading the transcriptions and re-listening to the recordings, by coding and sorting the information after each session and placing into themes (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 222) and by reflecting on the sessions and using the remarks of the participants to change and improve the *gatherings* and the study.

As the researcher, along with my participant co-researchers, I looked for, and reflected on, recurrent themes in the discussions and journal entries, tying these back to the research questions. I watched for action-orientation Jewish ways of knowing, beliefs and values. I also looked for (Jewish) metaphors, service-learning principles, personal fulfillment indicators, compassionate beliefs and engagements with others, commitment and responsibility to service-learning, and connections (to community, to learning, and to service).

## Research Trustworthiness

I trust you! That is the main reason I am willing to be in the study. (*Project participant*)

In order to discover if my research and the results of the research were trustworthy or credible, I used multiple data gathering methods included collection of recordings during *gathering* times (and the transcriptions of these *gatherings*), my personal observations of these *gatherings*, individual journal entries, interactions with and reports from recipient agencies, e-mails and other correspondences, and personal reflections. I also utilized “thick description” (Lichtman, 2013) in describing in detail as much as I could about what happened during the gatherings and beyond to “not just explain the behavior, but also to understand it in terms of the larger context” (p. 75) and to help support the analysis of my data.

You might say I used *triangulation*, “a concept that uses several methods or strategies of gathering data as a means of validation” (Lichtman, 2013, p. 292). However *triangulation* and *validity* are *scientific* terms generally used for positivistic (absolute truths) results, which I cannot claim. Therefore, instead of looking for truths (with and without a capital *T* – truth or Truth), I looked for *intertextuality*, a process that explores the data for agreements and disagreements. *Intertextuality* is a form of reading between the lines of the words or data gathered, in which one looks for the patterns, repetitions, hesitations, choice of vocabulary, use of metaphors, etc. of the participants. As part of the process, I also looked for *omissions*, *selectivities*, *slippage* (*what people want to tell us*), and *silences* which are the lapses, oversights, lies, and misinformation created by what



participants choose NOT to include, divulge, or explore (K. Casey, personal communication, 01/29/09) .

I used *quotes* as expressed verbatim by the participants as well as *grounded commentary* (Merriam, 2009; Lichtman, 2013) in which I speak to the data, look for themes, and discuss their meaning. I also employed *peer review* in which I asked educators, other volunteer coordinators, my fellow doctoral students, my friends, and other interested parties, to review my data and findings, after removing personally identifying data. I especially sought *member checks* (Merriam, 2009), also known as *inter-rater reliability* (Lichtman, 2013), in which the participants, my co-researchers in this study, read and discussed my data and findings to see if there was agreement in the research activities described, in the interpretations, and in the adequacy of my data collection and analysis. I invited all of the participants to read and respond to the study in a member-check focus group meeting, and took the feedback from this meeting to make final revisions to the data, reports, and findings.

### **Researcher Subjectivity and Positionality**

Subject or object, my position remains; neither subject nor object, but still standing! (*Project* researcher)

In the prologue of this study, I introduced my subjectivity and positionality. Subjectivity refers to those qualities that I possess that probably affect my observations and results of the research. Positionality refers to my *place in space*. These mean that the person I am cannot be divorced from the way I view the world, or from my research that emerges from my perspectives. Bettez (2012) explains that positionalities are “impacted

by myriad structural and cultural influences, such as upbringing, peer groups, geographic location, appearance, life changes, institutional pressures, other social identities, and personal challenges” (p. 207). Peshkin (1988) writes that one should systematically identify, become aware of, recognize, and understand one’s subjectivity and positionality throughout the course of one’s research (p. 17) since this deeply affects the research. People reading research studies benefit by knowing the values and beliefs of the researcher and their *agendas* for their research. As much as people *try* to remain objective or neutral they cannot because humans are the collections of their experiences, education, skills, values, beliefs, upbringings, and especially their interpretations based on those experiences, education, skills, values, beliefs, and upbringings, which in turn color our worlds and are inseparable from our every thought, feeling, and action.

### **Benefits and Risks**

Risk? Isn’t that the name of a game? Are we going to play games? (*Project participant*)

One of the benefits to the participants and to the audience reading this is the possibility of broadening perspectives regarding community and the self. The greatest benefit to participants is the ability to tell their story to others and for others to benefit from these stories as well. The findings of this study may have positive implications for past, present, and future participants and for those who work, live, and play with older adults.

The risks for participants in this study were very minimal and similar to any risk undertaken by those in any volunteer activity and in the process of learning and growing.

By following the UNCG's IRB guidelines for protecting the identity of all participants, maintaining confidentiality at all times, and following the University's guidelines for properly securing or destroying all documents related to the study after it is completed, potential risks are minimized. The findings of this study may or may not be applicable beyond the participants in the study but that will be addressed more in the conclusions chapter.

### **Choosing the Participants**

Why did you ask me to be in your study? I never went to college, so what could I have to say that is important to know?! (*Project* participant)

With the model framework in place, it was time to implement the *Project*, and to simultaneously study it. The target population was mature adults over the age of 50 who were in transition in their lives. One of the transition periods that I wanted to study was that of retirement. Retirement is usually considered a time of slowing down and of decline. I propose that it is a time of new possibilities. Many retirees, especially those in the baby boomer years, are interested in remaining active. They appear to want meaning in their lives while they do something meaningful for others. Although it has become a cliché, I know from personal chats and anecdotal information that many of the volunteers that I work with are looking to *give back*.

Recruitment of participants was a simple process. I contacted those who volunteer at *The Agency* who were over the age of 50. I did this recruitment via e-mails, phone calls, personal visits, and at senior group events that I normally attend as part of my job. For the benefit of this study, a non-random sample was taken from available volunteers at

*The Agency*. This study utilized both a convenience sampling (volunteers who were available at the time) and purposive sampling (which is based on the researcher's experience and knowledge with volunteers at a faith-based organization). Most of the subjects were Jewish, white, working or middle-class, hetero-sexual, able-bodied, and seasoned volunteers, making it appear to be a more homogeneous sampling. This also made it a criterion sampling (the participants needed to be experienced volunteers so I did not have to spend my research time training them). I invited over forty people to participate in the *Project*, and during the implementation of the Project, many of the participants also recruited and invited their friends to participate, creating a type of snowball sample. Another 12 people were recruited by friends, most of whom wanted to participate but had other obligations at the time we chose to meet (such as regularly scheduled game sessions that have been going on for years). Anyone who asked to be part of the *Project* was accepted into the study, and no one withdrew from the study.

There was no limitation on who, theoretically, could participate in the study; it did not matter what gender (male, female, or transgendered people can participate), race (any race can participate, however, I have access to Jewish participants who are mostly White), experience level (varied life experience might actually be beneficial to the group discussion and perspective), educational achievement (all levels of educational accomplishment was not expected to negatively affect the present and future learning of the participants), and age (this is the only limit of the study - one needed to be over the age of 50 - although age-related dementia was a possibility that might have needed to be addressed). I chose the term *mature* or *older adult* to differentiate it from the generic

term *adult*. Adult designation is sometimes referenced at age 18 (voting age) and sometimes at 21 (drinking age). Most of service-learning *adults* are younger than thirty and I wanted to make sure that it was understood that the adults in the study are older than the usual age of service-learning participants.

I considered creating a control group, those agency volunteers who were not part of the study, but in reviewing various measurement tools I could not find, and I did not want to create, a pre-and post-test for both groups that measured compassion, open-mindedness, and community connection. In the end, 11 participants were able to attend these *gatherings*. Scheduling conflicts were the biggest barriers to attendance. The sampling size was limited on purpose and by forces outside my control making it easier to gather in-depth information regarding the process and the experiences of the participants. This attendance barrier was actually a benefit to my research because otherwise I would have had over 50 participants, making it difficult for me to implement the *Project*, wade through all the data and to obtain deeper exploration and insight. Below is an e-mail, similar to many I received throughout the entire time of the study, showing prospective participant's desire to be part of the *Project*, but lacking the time to do so:

Gail--so sorry again but J & I are leaving tomorrow for Atlanta & Texas for babysitting our grandkids--will return on Feb. 26th--at some point hopefully I will make one of your sessions. Take care, L. (Potential *Project* participant)

## Designations and Labels

There were many possible labels or titles that might identify these mature adult service-learners who agreed to be part of this study. The term *participant* seemed to be the most appropriate. The word *participant* has at its root and motivation the active verb *to participate*, although terms such as *co-creator*, *co-learner*, *co-participator*, *co-action researchers*, and *co-researchers* were also considered. These participants were definitely not to be categorized as *subjects* of the study or as *objects* of the research; I wanted to emphasize and honor the active nature of the *participants* in this study and their status as *action researchers*.

In previous chapters, the reasons for choosing people who were over the age of fifty were presented. One reason involved transitional factors that might lead to an adjustment period fraught with confusion and loss, but also openness to change, new activities, possibilities, and exploration of a new sense of life meaning. None of the study participants had ever heard of, or experienced, service-learning. Most had stopped formal education decades ago and most were not involved in informal Jewish education either. The *participants* ranged in age from fifty-nine to ninety years young.

I asked all participants for a pseudonym for the research standards of privacy and confidentiality. Although all the participants told me to use their real names, each was ultimately given a pseudonym. Pseudonyms were also used for all the agencies as well as my own, simply known as *The Agency*. I verified the activities and discussions of the *gatherings* - individual quotes, journal entries and e-mails, observations and analyses, and results - with each participant. Their feedback during this verification process added

another layer to the *action research* cycle and depth and to the trustworthiness of the results.

### **Obstacles and Barriers Encountered**

You want me to do WHAT?! (*Project* participant)

There were a few barriers and obstacles that hampered, delayed, or impeded the *Project* and collection of data. Some I anticipated, but most were not expected. As part of *action research*, as these challenges emerged, we deliberated, pursued, recognized, and applied solutions, and then reviewed the solutions to see if they were beneficial, starting the process again. A discussion of these follows.

#### **Scheduling and Attendance Issues**

I can't come next month; I like you all, but I'm going to visit the grandkids and I like them better! (*Project* participant)

I imagined that older adults would have large pockets of spare time to participate in the study and to perform the service and activities of the *Project*. I found that this was not always the case. Factors that impacted attendance included previous commitments (such as regular game sessions and social activities), medical appointments, and especially visits to children and grandchildren in and out of town. Interestingly, there was very little illness that limited attendance.

Timing issues and calendar cycles were also part of this attendance issue. Although the *school year* normally starts in September, and the researcher received all approvals to commence the project around that time, the *Project* could not proceed

weekly starting in September due to the timing of the Jewish high holy holidays and fall festivals which generally take over the Jewish calendar and Jewish people's time for almost two months (September and October). Then there was Thanksgiving in November, a time when many of the older adults travel to visit their children around the country. Then there was Hanukkah (and Christmas) in December, and more travel or company coming to visit. Since many of the participants were away during these times, to be with family and friends, we started the *Project* with fewer participants than expected. Over half of the participants approached in August to be part of the study could not commit their full time and energy until January.

The *Project* began with weekly meetings but these were too intense for the participants, who needed time to process and reflect deeper on the learning and service. Therefore, the *gatherings* were eventually moved to a monthly basis. I was also unsure about the duration of the *gatherings*. I told the participants that sessions were to last between one hour and one & a half hours. What worked out the best was to have a full hour of formal classroom and 15 minutes for socializing at the end of each session. The study, which initially was focused on all the participants proceeding through *lessons* together from the beginning in linear fashion, was changed to self-contained modules in which anyone who attended could fully participate in gatherings without having to attend or scaffold previous sessions.

Another obstacle identified that dealt with time issues was trying to decide which day and which part of the day to schedule the *gatherings*. Between doctors' appointments, watching grandchildren, traveling, playing games, and other



responsibilities, including their many volunteer and service responsibilities, I needed to set a time that worked for most. Since most of these older participants did not drive at night and many exercised in the mornings, we discovered that best times for *gatherings* were either right before lunch (11 am) or after lunch (1 pm or 3:30 pm). We found that the 3:30 pm time worked the best since it did not seem to infringe on anyone's dining, nap, errand, or game time. It was a *down time* - a time when not much is scheduled for older adults. We tried all of these different time and day slots until we settled on the third or fourth Wednesday (depending on holidays) of each month at 3:30 pm.

### **Schooling and Learning Issues**

I never went to *Heder* because only boys went to Jewish school, so I'm NOT Jewishly learned. (*Project* participant)

As mentioned previously, I wanted to downplay the hegemonic and negative aspects of classrooms. Some of the participants were reticent to be part of an academic or classroom situation. Many were concerned about not having attended college, of not being smart, or of being perceived as *dumb*. Therefore, when I presented the idea of the *Project* I told potential participants that we were going to chat and share our honest viewpoints on various topics based on their life experiences. Regarding the educational backgrounds of the 11 participants, four ceased their formal education after high school graduation, two continued on to trade school, one earned an associate's degree, three earned bachelor's degrees, and one participant completed a master's degree.

I considered Cowhey's (2006) thoughts about the importance of *building* classroom environment and communities, by utilizing students' sense of ownership, by

learning alongside students, by being a learner in one's own classroom, by developing a social justice classroom, by combining critical thinking and dialog, by questioning texts, by building trust, by using cooperation, and by imagining the perspectives of others (p. 227). The *Project* inspected and considered them all of these.

By placing the *schooling* in a *nontraditional* educational setting such as a nonprofit agency, labeling the academic portion as *gatherings*, and merging the formal and informal learning components of classroom and social interaction these older adults became more comfortable in *going back to school*. Wolk (2007) questions if it is possible to inspire people to live lives of learning and wonder when students are always told want to learn, when to learn, and how to learn (p. 652). This especially applies to adults, who, through media and advertising, are also told what to learn/know, when to learn/know, and how to learn/know. Old memories and old scripts persist and I wanted to reduce their impact on the new learning. I agree with Wolk's (2007) *schooling for human beings* which includes caring and empathy, environmental literacy, social responsibility, peace and nonviolence, media literacy, global awareness, creativity and imagination, money, family, food, and happiness (pp. 642-657). That is what this *Project* attempted to accomplish.

### **Writing Issues**

I don't write anymore, except on the computer. (*Project* participant)

This obstacle surprised me the most of all the barriers. I did not anticipate that half of the participants would flinch, be fearful, or complain about having to write.

Starting with the IRB form, and running throughout the entire *Project*, the explanation and *requirement* of writing was a definite challenge to participation in the *Project* as originally envisioned and formulated. Initially, I considered journal writing to be *THE* primary source of (critical) (self) reflection. Yet, I could not have been more wrong – reflection is an on-going process with many outlets and writing is just one of those. As part of *action research*, we dropped the mandatory requirement of journaling. In liberating the mandatory expectation of writing, other means of (critical) (self) reflection materialized, particularly in the discussions themselves.

The roots of this writing aversion – this unanticipated barrier to participation - derived from shaky or illegible handwriting as one ages, from immigrant (and native) concerns about proper grammar and spelling, from preference for reflection through verbal means, from feelings of inadequacy and self-identity as *bad* writers, and from believing that they did not have anything important to write or say. I just assumed that these individuals, who were raised pre-computer, would enjoy, and have time for, writing. I did discover, though, that some of the participants actually preferred using the computer (which they did *not* see as *writing*), which turned out to be extremely helpful to me as the researcher who now did not need to transcribe or type more data into my computer. I could *cut and paste* the data and not have trouble reading handwriting.

Most fortunate of all, these participants were willing to talk about their ideas, and freely (self) reflect on their service and learning through the discussions. Using the process of *action research*, this writing requirement became an optional activity; the reflection, and critical reflection were enhanced.

## **Chronic Conditions, Illnesses and Diseases**

I don't get around like I used to. I'm just happy to wake up in the morning and actually get out of bed! (*Project* participant)

Participants were not banned from participation in the Project by physical, mental, or emotional barriers, although such limitations would make it difficult to participate consistently. In the IRB, I did note that:

In order to ensure that group discussions and reflections do not become therapy sessions, individuals with certain diagnosed and self-describe mental health issues (such as uncontrolled schizophrenia) or debilitating physical (such as muscular dystrophy) or cognitive dysfunctions (such as Alzheimer's) are not be appropriate for this particular study. (IRB. 08/29/2011)(See Appendix A)

However, none of the participants presented with any of these dysfunctions. The greatest barrier was in physical mobility, which is addressed in the next chapters.

## **Generational Language Issues**

I never heard that term *Other* – is it a dictionary word? (*Project* participant)

My studies and readings often highlighted the importance of language and how language shapes realism and curriculum (Greene, 1991) including the formulation of new words, frames of references, probing questions, and postmodern perspectives. I found that I often had to start with the phrasing of the participants for them to understand my *post-modern* phraseology. For instance, when talking about *Otherness* one of the participants could not fully understand the concept until someone used the term *underprivileged*. This led to a discussion of how the term *Otherness* does not also mean

the same as the term *underprivileged*. This underscored how language and concepts they signify change even in our lifetime.

### **Jewish Identity and Other Identification Issues**

I think the Jewish Reform Movement is most closely aligned with social action.  
(*Project* participant)

Most of the participants of the study would characterize themselves as Jewish on the liberal scale of Judaism - secular, Reform, or Conservative. A few of the participants did grow up in Orthodox families but no longer remained part of that philosophical or observance tradition, although some traditions, thoughts, world-view patterns persisted. Most of the participants self-proclaimed as NOT *Jewishly learned* but sometimes appeared opinionated against those who were *ritualistically* orthodox regarding them as *perhaps* hypocritical in their moral and ethical behaviors as Jews. There were a few instances during the *gatherings*, in which orthodoxy was denigrated, or belittled, and not in terms of primarily Jewish orthodoxy but of orthodoxy or fundamentalism in all religious sects. I had not expected to have to deal with this, especially from a Jewish perspective. For me, a Jew is a Jew. When anti-Semitism rears its ugly head, or when Jews are under attack intellectually, emotionally or physically, it matters not to which Jewish sect individuals or groups belong. I think this is an issue within the Jewish community that needs further addressing and research but is beyond the scope of my research.

## Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the process of setting up the *Project* model and implementing it with 11 participants in seven sessions over five months. This included determining the best way to study it, how to obtain data, how to analyze the data, and how to recruit the participants. By using the qualitative applied research method of *action research*, the participants had an opportunity to become co-researchers in studying themselves and simultaneously improving practice. The *Project* emerged by merging and integrating multiple theories and practices into a loose web of connections. These multiple roads materialized into a super highway of *progressive, social justice and action-oriented, learning and learner-centered, personal development, experiential and cooperative, and liberatory education*. We encountered some barriers during the set-up of the methodology of the study, which were, by using *action research*, reflected on and surmounted. This process rallied us to drive through, by, over, or under the blockades to reach the other side of the streets, which were often newly paved and with new and interesting foliage and landmarks.

In the next chapter, I introduce the *Project* participants and described the process of the gatherings. The data are analyzed and interpreted. The findings of the study are presented and common themes are identified and described.

## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

A poor woman, an apple vendor, whose stand was near Rabbi Hayyim's house, once came to him complaining: "Rabbi, I have no money to buy what I need for the Sabbath."

"And what about your apple stand?" asked the zaddik [righteous man].

"People say my apples are bad," she answered, "and they won't buy."

Rabbi Hayyim immediately ran out on the street and called: "Who wants to buy good apples?" A crowd collected around him in no time at all; they handed out coins without looking at them or counting them, and soon all the apples were sold for two to three times what they were worth.

"Now you see," he said to the woman as she turned to go, "your apples were good; all that was the matter was that people just didn't know about it." (Buber, 1948/1969, p. 210-11)

This study was set up to investigate the feasibility of including older adults in service-learning models while adding a Jewish social action framework. It was set up not only to determine if the framework was functional but to see if the framework increased the participants' compassion, connection to community, commitment to service and learning, and personal fulfillment and satisfaction. In this chapter I present the data that emerged from the *Project*.

The purpose of this study was achieved by examining the *Project* during its implementation, by observing the process, and by obtaining the feedback of the participants. In looking for that which was previously unknown, pathways not formerly considered were illuminated. The results in this chapter are transported by the participants' words and comments captured from discussions at the *gatherings*,

journal entries, e-mail correspondences and other writings, informal conversations, interviews, participant observations, focus groups, and my direct observation. When wading through the hundreds of pages qualitative data, I kept Lunenburg & Irby's (2008) strategy in mind (see Chapter IV), especially by continually (re) reading through the data collected, sorting by theme and color, and providing *member checks* for the narratives placed in thematic categories.

The results in this chapter are presented in three sections: 1) description of the participants, including their demographic information and the agencies in which they provided service; 2) description of each *gathering* session; and 3) then common themes that emerged from these data. These themes include: 1) the value of pleasure and satisfaction in service, learning, and reflection; 2) the value of relationships and connections in community building; 3) the value of multiple perspectives; and 4) the value of compassion. These themes are the first critical step in the process to answering the research questions.

### **About the Project Participants**

I am 90 years YOUNG! (*Project* participant)

There were eleven participants in the *Project*. Although it was not planned as such, the sample maintains representatives from each decade of life over the age of 50. The youngest participant was 59, and the oldest was 90 years young. The mean age was 73.2. The mode was 67.5, and the median was 72. The age at retirement ranged from 52.5 to 84 with a mean of 67.4 years. There were two men and nine women in the



sample. Four of the participants were married, two were single, and five were widowed. Three participants completed high school, two attended trade school, one earned an associate's degree, four graduated with a bachelor's degree, and one finished a master's degree. Socioeconomically, most the participants were from *working class* to the *middle of middle class* in their upbringing as well as in their present financial situations and worldviews. All the participants could be classified as White, although there was *Sephardic* ancestry in a few of the participants. All of the participants were presently Jewish - either born of Jewish parents or converted to Judaism - and members of a reform, conservative, or orthodox (Chabad) congregation. They were mostly able-bodied; although, at least a third of the participants walked with canes or other assistive mobility devices. They all lived independently or with family; none of the participants resided in retirement facilities, although this was not by design.

John and Sara, ages 68 and 67, are married and participated together in the study. They moved from the south a few years ago. Both are professionals with bachelor degrees and extensive work history; he retired five years ago from the accounting professional, and she retired five years ago from retail. He provides service at least twice a month at an agency that provides caregiver respite services, at *The Agency* working with older retirees, and at his Temple in various capacities. She was once highly active in volunteer service but developed a chronic degenerative condition that limits her mobility, energy, and undertakings.

Vivian turned 90 during the *Project* process. A high level business woman her whole career, she had little time for volunteer activities. A widow of over 20 years, she

retired at the age of 84 and moved six years ago from New Jersey to this town to be close to her family, eventually moving in with her grown daughter and grown grandchild. She serves on her Temple's funeral committee and in *The Agency* as a friendly visitor for a woman who is 97 years old.

Nancy, age 81 and married for 57 years, is a long-time resident of, and volunteer in, this town. She worked as a sales representative and retired at the age of 66. She serves on the board of a few *senior* organizations, volunteers at her synagogue in various capacities, and has been a captain for one of our annual Mitzvah Day service projects.

Lena, age 77, volunteered her whole life, but has been even more active since her retirement five years ago at age 72. She likes to help, even if it is "hard physical labor," as long as it is helping someone. She provides service at a therapeutic riding facility for physically and developmentally-challenged individuals, at the local science center, and at her Temple - in the library, in the choir, and teaching at Sunday school. Although her husband recently died after a long illness, she never ceased her service.

Tali, age 68, is a world traveler. Foreign born and fluent in many languages, she is one of the leaders of the local Yiddish group that meets weekly. Ron, age 76, Tali's friend for the last couple of years, is a retired professional who does not commit to any long-term service projects. Born and raised outside the United States, he moved five years ago to this town after his wife passed away, to be closer to his relatives.

Carol, age 84, retired at age 65 from library services and likes to be involved in cultural and intellectual pursuits within many different communities. She likes to provide service where she can have the most impact but especially where she can have major

input into the service process. She moved to this town to be closer her children, and, although her husband died shortly after they moved here a few years ago, she remains highly active and engaged in community events. She provides service in the office of one of the local senior centers, in *The Agency* as an English tutor for a non-native American, as a docent at both the art museum and the historical museums, and in community leadership positions.

Mary, age 86, likes to stay busy and to feel useful and volunteers to reduce boredom and be with other people. She is a high school graduate who worked in an office her entire career, eventually moving up to office manager. A widow for decades, she retired at the age of 70 and moved here to be closer to her children and grandchildren.

Gillian, age 67, worked in the marketing and fundraising industry for many years, including as executive director and as regional administrator for a Jewish fundraising organization up North. Although she recently *officially* retired due to the challenging employment market, she would gladly accept the right part-time position if offered. She is known for her hospitality. She volunteers her fundraising skills at a non-profit music and arts organization, her hospitality skills at a local chapter of an international women's advocacy and fundraising group, her office and organizational skills at her synagogue, and her interpersonal skills in *The Agency* by visiting frail clients. She is married and has two grown children with children of their own, who visit her regularly.

Anna, age 59, moved to this town two years ago after her employer of 40 years went bankrupt during the recent economic slump. Anna never volunteered in any capacity prior to her unemployment but started to do so in order to meet people, network,

make connections, and to stay busy. Although she volunteered at three places for a year prior to the *Project*, she became employed during the second week of the *Project*. She has never been married and has no children. She provided her service at a local hospital, at a non-profit organization that deals with discrimination, and at *The Agency* through various projects.

### **About the Partnering Agencies**

Our agency helps those who... (The non-profit community agencies)

The participants provided service at numerous agencies and organizations. These organizations included two local chapters of international NGOs, four local social service agencies, five local faith-based organizations, three local arts based organizations, three local educational institutions, two local recreation centers, two medical based establishments, and two local public institutions.

Service duties included delivering meals, visiting older adults, providing office work, sitting on boards, fundraising, delivering gifts to children and adults at secular and Jewish holidays, transporting older persons to medical appointments and errands, teaching various subjects, consulting to non-profit organizations, tutoring English, organizing programs and projects at social service agencies, making and providing goods for vulnerable populations, reading to elementary school children, and serving on committees.

Populations served include adults and children who are developmentally delayed and physically challenged, children with terminal illnesses, *senior citizens* who reside in

retirement and residential communities, people with Alzheimer's and dementia conditions and their caregivers, local community members, adults with reading difficulties, elementary school aged children, people who experienced discrimination, older people living alone at home, people who are immigrants from other countries, women's groups, babies who were born prematurely, children who are musicians from low-income neighborhoods, people who are indigent dental patients, children who have experienced bullying, Jewish congregants, and people who are patients in a hospital.

The participants met with their agency representatives and clients to elucidate, problem-solve, and provide action plans to meet community needs. They accomplished this by brainstorming ideas, finding more efficient and effective ways to serve individuals and communities, setting up new needed programs, joining boards, becoming group and agency leaders, reporting activities to the community, marketing the services of the agencies, getting information out to clients who might benefit from agency services, fundraising, writing grants, working directly with clients, and suggesting programs and other services they might be able to offer or create.

The participants had previous relationships with most of their agencies, and were asked to take the information about the process of service-learning to their respective agencies to fulfill an agency/ community need. The researcher was not as involved in this *service* portion of the *Project*, except to check in with participants to see if they needed to be matched with an agency and to follow-up with the agencies at evaluation time. Participants shared their *service* experiences at each *gathering* session.

## About The Gatherings

Gatherings?! Is that like gathering at Mount Sinai? (*Project* participant)

The *gatherings* took place on a weekday afternoon in an office board room.

Participants often came early to the *gatherings* so they could chat and socialize prior to the formal sessions, and they often stayed for long periods of time afterwards continuing the discussion of the day, offering personal insights and accounts that additionally individualized and anchored the concepts. A repeated sentiment during the *Project* and at evaluation was, “allow time for initial social interaction and summation at end” (John, 07/10/2012, 4 month follow-up survey).

To diminish power inequities between *facilitator* and *participants* no one sat at the *head* of the table. All were co-learners. Ron commented:

Gail, it's almost as if you weren't there. It's like sport- there is a referee and every time he blows the whistle on you, you become aware of him and it disrupts the game. However when you see another game the referee may not even be noticed because of the way they run the game. You have the knack as if you were hardly even there, but you come in a crucial moments. When you get older you get flashbacks. When I do bible study, when your mind is in the right channel, away you go. I was not accustomed to your type of discussion and volunteering and I enjoyed it. It's not often we see more mature people going for further study. (Ron, four-month post-gathering interview, 08/01/2012)

Below are some descriptions of what occurred during each *gathering*.

### Gathering # 1

Date: November 9, 2011

Number of Participants: Six

Topic: Orientation. *Todot* (Gratitude)

Process: At this orientation and gratitude session, we reviewed the *Project's* foundational concepts – service-learning and critical reflection. The participants were able to articulate their understanding of service-learning from their perspectives:

I think you are taking it one step further from the Center [SC - a senior center that offers educational classes], where when you learn something, you're learning it for yourself. Keeping it within you. What you're proposing now is that we go ahead and take what we've learned and, extend it, or integrate it into the community. (Nancy, Gathering # 1, 11/09/2011)

The ideas of reflection, self-reflection, and critical-reflection were further defined and emphasized. The participants were also able to articulate their understanding of the concept of critical self-reflection:

And people don't think. They're in their own little box and all they care about is themselves. They don't take that step to think. I think it is selfish if you are made aware of a situation and when you don't do anything about it. (Anna, Gathering # 1, 11/09/2011)

Each subsequent gathering expanded the reflective process. Those who missed the initial orientation were given an abbreviated version of the orientation, along with the handouts, and taken through the process, including discussion of motivations, processes, expectations, possible goals and possibilities, realities, and possible outcomes. During the orientation, the following topics were presented and discussed: ground rules for participation (respect, journal, and open-mindedness); confidentiality; discussion of ethics and morals; case studies and role play. This session and subsequent ones created a culture of respect and inquiry which was contrary to cultural norms as represented on many media outlets. As one participant aptly put it, "we agree to disagree but not be

disagreeable!” (Ron, 11/19/2011). As part of *action research*, we also decided that these *gatherings* should occur during the day - most older people do not want to drive in the evening - and that gatherings should run no longer than 90 minutes in duration. Initially, the *Project* structure was disconcerting to some of the participants, especially those with expectations of passive learning styles (Freire, 1970/2000) paired with the idea of certainty or a single truth. For most of the participants, these *gatherings* were very different from other classroom and educational structures they previously encountered but they acclimated quickly.

The first *gathering* focused on the concept of gratitude and this theme ran through all the sessions. At the beginning of the process, the participants were grateful for things like family and health, but by the end of the process, they realized that they were also grateful for Jewish ways of knowing and values, and how these have shaped them, for the ability to provide service and for the opportunity to continue their learning.

During this session, we focused on the *Modeh Ani* (*I am thankful*) and *Asher Yatzar* (*who fashioned openings*) prayers (see Appendix C) that are found in every Jewish *Siddur* (prayer book). One of the participants remembered that each morning during her childhood her father made her say the *Modeh Ani* prayer in Hebrew (the English translation is “I give thanks before You, living and eternal King, who has returned (restored) my soul into me in compassion. Your faithfulness is immense.” She knew the prayer was about being thankful but she has never previously read the prayer in English. She commented, “Is that what we were saying every morning?” (Tali, 11/09/2011)



These prayers led to much discussion and opened up the concept of gratitude to a wider perspective. This led to exploration of the different ways of knowing through doing, such as through questioning (we used the Bible story of Avraham questioning God in Genesis 18:20-33). We commented about the types of people who took action after questioning the status quo, such as the Freedom Riders of the American Civil Rights Movement of the 60s, and those who risked their lives to save Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, and Other humans during the Nazi Holocaust.

## **Gathering # 2**

Date: November 16, 2011

Number of Participants: Eight

Topic: *Tzedakah* (Justice and charity)

Process: This *gathering* focused on *Tzedakah* (justice and charity). The model was outlined in the previous chapter. It was interesting that the Hebrew word *Tzedakah* derives from the root for *justice* but has come to mean *charity*, especially in American Judaism. During this session, the word *justice* was used only four times but the word *charity* was used forty-six times by the participants. People do not often make the connection between the two and this was never more evident than at this *gathering*. There were many opportunities for the participants to discuss and reflect upon which level they believed they enacted and demonstrated in their justice and charity work, related to Maimonides' eight levels of *Tzedakah* (which was the experiential activity). For many, this was the first time they brought their volunteer service to conscious levels.

For instance, Vivian's reflection shows how most of her thoughts and actions related to *Tzedakah* were unexamined and that the reflective process takes time to unfold:

But getting back to this, I, this is an interesting point because I remember the word *tzedek*. A person who is a *tzedek* was somebody who was outstanding – giving - not necessarily money wise, but doing things, and so forth. Which degree of *tzedakah* for me? I wouldn't know because I never, ever categorized it. It was something I want to do. Part of it keeps me occupied. It gives me a chance to meet people that I don't know, which is important when you are an outsider coming in, or a stranger, and you don't know anybody. The Jewish community is an important factor in all of that and how that enters into it, I don't know, but it's important. And just doing things, I don't think of it as I'm going to get anything back or whatever. I'm occupied - it's really good for me! Just being there and doing it. Thank God it's there for me to do. That's how I look at it. So I don't know where I fall [in the 8 levels of *tzedakah*]. (Vivian, Gathering # 3, 11/30/2011)

Through her verbalized reflection, Vivian provided a transparency to her thought process related to *tzedakah* including her difficulty in categorizing her self-identity in relationship to that Jewish value. This process was helpful to the other participants in articulating their thoughts, beliefs, values, and actions. These participants generally perceive of themselves as giving, generous, and compassionate individuals on an intuitive level yet have problems identifying or articulating their self-identity on that continuum. Not generally seeing themselves on either extreme, neither as a *tzadik* (a righteous, almost saintly person) nor as a totally uncaring individual, most self-identified ambiguously within the middle. Reflection and experiential exercises opened up the ways of knowing onto a cognitive level, and then integrated that self-identity into a more embodied sense.

### Gathering # 3

Date: November 30, 2011

Number of Participants: Four

Topic: *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality)

Process: This session occurred directly after the Thanksgiving holiday and many people were away during this time. During this session we used the Biblical story of Abraham welcoming and providing hospitality towards his guests (Genesis 18:1-6) to highlight the way of knowing and doing through hospitality. Discussion started with ways in which participants show or give hospitality when providing service and ended with their feelings about their own experiences in receiving (or not receiving) hospitality or welcoming into their service, learning, and service-learning communities. The social and community aspects of service and of learning drove this dialogue:

It's very difficult. And I said, when I went to knitting group and I had to force myself to get out of the house, and I read it in the bulletin, and walk into this room, and women sitting around that I don't know, I don't know a single one. And I said, "May I join you? My name is Vivian" and of course they made me welcome and this and that. It was wonderful and then Joan, may her memory be a blessing, told me to come to FC. And I remember walking in the room. There were all these people. And she waved at me, you know, she saved me a seat. And that's how it began. (Vivian, Gathering # 3, 11/30/2011)

It was after this third weekly session that we realized that there was too much information and too many concepts to process in such a short period of time. Most of concepts were new to the participants and they needed time re-read them and let them sink in. This is when we democratically, through the *action research* process, decided to change the *gatherings* frequency to twice a month. It was at the fourth session that the

frequency of gatherings became monthly, where it remained. At evaluation, all the participants agreed that the monthly interim was ideal, commenting that it “gives a chance to get things absorbed and worked on” (Vivian, 07/21/2012, four month follow-up survey) or “once a month is good” (Anna, 07/07/2012, four month follow-up survey).

The participants also asked for more than just the handout of the Bible text or definitions of service-learning and reflection concepts. Therefore, an agenda was drafted for each gathering and included sections for review of previous gatherings, new topic sections, experiential activities, websites to visit, journal prompts and homework assignments. I initially avoided having a written agenda or structure at the onset of the *gatherings*, preferring that these *gatherings* flow organically, wanting to focus on the *experience* instead of the *text*, and wishing to keep the participants from being anxious about *schooling* (and their level of knowledge or perceived lack thereof). In asking if the handouts were helpful, a majority claimed they were, especially “being able to refer back to it is helpful” (Vivian, 07/21/2012, four month follow-up survey).

#### **Gathering # 4**

Date: December 14, 2011  
Number of Participants: Six  
Topic: *K'hilah* (Community)

Process: This gathering was timed just prior to Hanukkah and Christmas holidays. There was much traveling scheduled, and the participants were busy with their responsibilities and planning for holiday celebrations. It was a good time to speak of community, to list all the different *communities* the participants were involved in during

this busy and active time of the year, and to classify their identities within each. For instance, Gillian wrote in her e-mail after this session:

Well you know nowadays people are living longer and the people who were always active stay active. They stay active until 85 or 90 - they do! I see it, but the world hasn't seen it. The community hasn't seen it. They don't relate to it yet. They think, "Oh!?" One of my sons would call me and, and say, "What did you do today?" And I would tell him. Then I asked him, "What do you do all day?" You know, they still think to themselves - "Well mom's not working anymore" so, you know, they don't understand I belong to many organizations. (Gillian, Gathering # 4, 12/14/2011)

Gillian sensed this need to remain active and engaged which tied in with the idea of belonging and feeling welcomed that underscored the previous *gathering* section. This idea ties into one of the common themes – the importance of relationship and community. However, the difference here is that the participants recognized the invisibility of older people, even within their own networks, and a lack of community awareness of the needs of older people to seek out new opportunities and connections in the community. This was never more obvious than during the follow conversation when one of the participants described her sense of isolation from the community after a recent surgery:

Mary: Well you know this is what bothered me. I told you this has been a bad year for me. I belong to the K [crafts] club - no one called me, sent me a card or came to visit. I belong to the Y [language] group - no one called me, sent me a card or came to visit. That really hurt my feelings.

Vivian: Oh boy it would hurt me to.

Mary: You know, what is the sense of going to these organizations if out of sight - out of mind?

Gillian: But it's not only you. Because a friend of mine was, had an operation, was sick. Half the people in our group - more than half the people in the group - didn't

even know. 'Til finally I got to the person who's responsible for that kind of thing and said "By the way!" You know! So that's the reason that you need, need not only community but you need someone in that community to be aware if somebody is missing.  
(Gathering # 4, 12/14/2011)

The typecast is that older people have their established patterns related to community connections and do not need or are not looking for additional connections. These participants say that this is a mistaken fallacy. Older adults can adapt and grow using their curiosity, creativity, and contacts to forge new connections, but they need venues for this to occur. They also need people in those communities who are responsible to/for others beyond their own needs, and for people in those communities to have a way of notification for all:

So I've always been a big believer in community. But on the other side of the coin, I am the quintessential "out of sight - out of mind". That kind of person. I volunteer for a number of things. One of the ones that I do is where we give caretakers roughly four to four-and-a-half hours to take care of whatever they have to, when they drop somebody off. Mostly early onset Alzheimer's or dementia, but they are not really early onset, in most cases. People who have various stages of Alzheimer's. But then I realized that my mother has Alzheimer's! She's in Florida, they don't have anything comparable. It's very depressing because I knew if she came here I know I could bring her there and I know she would enjoy it. So it is very difficult to broach the matter with, but, but that's something that came about. (John, Gathering # 7, 03/21/2012)

During this session, the idea of having a blog for more connection and notification was introduced; however, not all the participants had computers or were computer literate so not all participants could partake in this activity. This idea was not further developed at the time but might be part of a subsequent *Project*.

## Gathering # 5

Date: January 31, 2012

Number of Participants: Nine

Topic: *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God). Divine spark & Otherness.

Process: During this session, the participants realized the importance of language. For instance, they understood that the term *Otherness* does not have to imply *underprivileged*- although many people link the terms. By reviewing the stereotypes of Jews, the participants began to consciously confront their possible stereotypes about the Other in other groups and within Judaism. We thoroughly explored the concept of Otherness through the idea of *Divine spark* in all, Martin Buber's Dialogic *I-Thou*, and Emanuel Levinas' *Responsibility to Other*. There was much sharing regarding Otherness in discussing our different agencies and those we serve, which opened up more perspectives and reflection on Otherness, service, and learning. The participants spent most of the session challenging each other's stereotypes of Otherness, as well as challenging media reporting and perspectives of Otherness (such as the race of welfare recipients, the nationality of illegal immigrants and their work ethics, the history of slavery and its continuation around the world, and the geo-cultural-political aspects of class warfare). Below are the thoughts of one of the participants regarding development of stereotypes:

And, you know, I'm sure we all have our own feelings about this... but I think it's a way of life that you're brought up with and you continue it late into your life. It is something you become indoctrinated with, not by direct contact or direct instruction; it's just indoctrination by seeing what's going on. And a person, I don't think many people who have their children watching them, are saying "you

must do this - this is what you've got to do - and you must do that." They are not doing it because they want to do it, and the children are going to see what's going on and they're gonna pick up little bits here and there, and in later years that becomes very relevant....I'm not really sure about this "IT" stuff - I-T and I-Thou. What it seems to come to is to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." When you start saying you have a responsibility to someone, I don't know how far that responsibility must extend. Each and every one will have his own impression of how he should run his life. But if you live by that phrase [the Golden Rule] then you are actually looking to see how you can assist, without being conscious of it, maybe, even. When you assist it becomes second nature - a way of life. I sympathize with Nancy, after doing it for so many years. The problem is with the younger people. I think your thinking will impregnate the younger people in that they become more aware of the need to volunteer. Of caring. Anyway, it is a bit of a push. It could happen. I think the younger people of today are better than you are making them out to be. (Ron, Gathering # 5, 01/31/12)

Ron brings up numerous points, but I want to focus on the transmission of *providing service* as a character trait to emulate. The participants saw this as a moral imperative. Most of the participants bemoaned the fact that more of their friends, and their children, did not participant in service or in learning activities:

And why me? Most of my friends do very little volunteer work and some even feel I do too much. They do not have this desire to "repair the world." I am not happy sitting home and reading or cooking or watching TV all day. I am happier when I am outside doing "something." I'll have to think on this some more. (Nancy, Gathering # 5, 01/31/2012)

Often the participants ended their thoughts with "I'll have to think on this some more." That was the case in the experiential portion of this session, in which each *Hevruta* (dyad pairings) was asked to come up with as many stereotypes of as many *Others* as they could name. The participants came to reflect upon and challenge themselves and each other regarding those stereotypes during this session and for the remainder of the *Project*:



Sara: Can I just say something before we go on? The view of people - that really is the key to what was said before. I think it's geographical, too. Okay? I think the view of some other group is very much dependent on where you grew up and what your experience of the group was. As you were growing up.

Carol: The dynamics of the community.

Gail: I think a lot about Ron who was raised in South Africa and the viewpoint of what happened when the government changed hands and how it could have been a bloodbath. It could have been "Oh, this is what you did to us all these years so we are going to do the same to you." I think that's a fear for a lot of people. And yet they were able to make the transition.

Ron: That was dependent 100% on one man - and that was Mandela, Nelson Mandela. The fact that when you were saying - you should think back to the years of bondage in Egypt - and you bring that back to Mandela. When you live your years one way and then you have to shift your thinking, should you think about it? So you forgive? But don't forget? You forget but you don't forgive? Is that what you are saying?

Everyone (in Unison): You forgive but you don't forget.

Ron: You forgive but you don't forget?

Vivian: You forgive but you don't forget!

Ron: Yes, you forgive. He was a man in prison for 28 years.

Sara: And he could've been one of those people. He could have been bitter. But the whole country there was basically the same. In this country it depends if you come from the Northeast, if you come from the South, if you come from the west - every area is very different in how it treats its groups and how it sees its groups. Every area is different in the way it treats different groups of people.

Ron: Well it all comes down to that there's a lot of prejudice everywhere.  
(Gathering # 5, 01/31/2012)

By acknowledging continuing prejudice in others, the participants were able to see their own contributions to the issues. By seeing and acknowledging alternative and non-mainstream ways of acting, they broadened their choices for future action.

## Gathering # 6

Date: February 21, 2012  
Number of Participants: Six  
Topic: *Yisra'el* (Wrestling and struggling)

Process: During this gathering, the concept of Otherness continued to direct the learning session, even though it was a month since the previous *gathering*. The following is one such discussion of Otherness:

Nancy. Well, Otherness for us can be anybody that's 30 years younger than us. Otherness can be you or me.

Sara. Why? Because you are not part of me - are not part of my family. You are the Other.

Nancy: Ok. I am the Other! That's what I am saying....

Tali: As long as each of us is an individual to some extent, there's always, even within the closest person who you love and care about, there is Otherness and difference. There will always be different thoughts about Others. There will always be something Other. (Gathering # 6, 02/21/2012)

By identifying that older people are often considered *Other* the participants began to encapsulate one of the issues of why older people might not be considered active participants in service-learning activities but are a group that is generally on the receiving end of these activities. They wrestled with this issue and that segued nicely into the concepts of this sixth session - wrestling and struggle.

At the request of one of the participants, I brought in the Jewish Prayer, *Eishet Hayil* (Woman of Valor) - a blessing that a husband traditionally bestows on his wife at the Sabbath dinner table (see Appendix C). We read and discussed this prayer, looking at

multiple perspectives of the role of women in family and community dynamics, as well as a woman's self-identity and self-esteem in reference to external and internal factors. We discussed power, work, family and contraception, caring and charity, love and compassion, strength, and service from multiple viewpoints. We debated if the *woman of valor* saw herself as a feminist, and how she might self-validate. We talked about ideals and realities, as noted in the following dialogue:

Sara: I don't think anybody can be all these things.

John: I think that you're holding up an ideal. I mean a *woman of valor* according to this writing is somebody who has purpose and gets their reward fulfilling a purpose. The purpose of how they envision it - what they envision that to be.

Ron: I do think a *woman of valor* actually doesn't have to measure all of these - a woman does have a majority of these things. She has to do a lot of things to help herself, her family - I think she has to be so absolutely wonderful and precious-more precious than corals. I think that's asking a bit too much of any human being. (Gathering # 6, 02/21/2012)

As a bookend to *Eishet Hayil* prayer, we read and discussed the *Birchat HaShachar* – the morning prayers which thank God for various actions, such as clothing the naked, giving sight to the blind, and raising the downtrodden. The participants came to the conclusion that although we are thanking God, this prayer was a reminder and a role model for the ways in which we might show our compassion and social-action. In the conversation below, the participants found new meanings for themselves in *giving sight to the blind*:

Nancy: Well there are those who are not so blind that they cannot see. Do we mean, really? Blind that I cannot see you, or I can see you but I'm blind to who you are and what you're saying and the world around me.

John: You don't need sight per se to see.

Nancy: Right! You don't need sight to see.  
(Gathering #6, 02/21/2012)

The participants were able to get past the literal meaning of the prayers and to find interpretations that melded with their service, learning, and reflection. That conversation led to a discussion of free-will and especially the free-will in providing service to people who fit into those categories identified in the prayer. The action-justice and social-action focus of Judaism was brought into sharper focus:

Volunteering was always doing unto others. It was always something that was preached by the rabbis. For the churches, it was not that way. I think the churches have started, maybe in the last 20 years, to have their parishioners do. Because I had a neighbor, a very good neighbor, who belonged to [her] Church, and she helped at the church and she did whatever. I mean a LIST of things, and she said to me, "I will probably not go to heaven." I said, "Someone like YOU?! Then who goes to heaven? Why do you say that?" And she said, "Because I can't truly take Jesus into my heart, and if you don't take Jesus into your heart, you can do all the good in the world but you are not going to go to heaven." (Nancy, Gathering # 6, 02/21/2012)

As we will see in the subsequent month, this viewpoint of religious interpretations, and the struggle between the interpretation of creeds (beliefs, such as authority) or deeds (actions, such as helping those who are in need), added another layer to the learning and to the study.

### **Gathering # 7**

Date: March 21, 2012

Number of Participants: Eight

Topic: *Rahmanut* & *Gemilut* *Hasadim* (Compassion & deeds of loving-kindness)

Process: At this last session, we progressed through the agenda as we always did and the participants described their service, learning, and reflection for the month. Since some of the participants utilized the Internet and the library to look up different topics related to previous discussions, they described their additional learning. With the U.S. Presidential election looming, this *gathering* focused on the concept of the prophetic and Constantinian (or left and right hand) viewpoint of God (Lerner 2006; West, 2004). This gave the participants an opportunity to understand two different world views – not just from the political stance, but from fundamental beliefs about the world and our ways of knowing within it. At this last session, there was a very lively discussion, causing the hour and a half session to pass by very quickly. We described the characteristics often attributed to the Left and to the Right, discussed why we chose those particular characteristic, and explained how we saw them become manifested in daily use and rhetoric. The following conversation is illustrative of the ideas posed:

Gail: So what do we normally think of when we think of the Left?

Nancy: One of those who wants to help everybody. We take money from you to help the poor.

John: There's not much Left left!

Tali: More choices. I think more choices, more freedom.

John: I think the differential is if you're on the Left you tend to see things in varying shades of gray. If you're on the Right you tend to see things in blacks and whites.

Lena: That is very right! That is why they see Right as right!

John: But if you get rid of everybody and just have that little community, they will find something to split that little community again. (Giggle). It comes down

to “me.” But I think on Right and Left you can see both these things. If you've ever seen a Left argue "If you do this, you are going to end up with that" which is again fear. It may be fear trying to motivate liberals but it is still an approach of fear rather than rational approach.

Lena: Run that by me again.

John: I think that a lot of what you find on the Right also is, it's an inability to extend beyond a certain group. So I think you could find a lot of “right wing evangelicals” that in their own community give as much, help as much, volunteer as much within their community as any others. However it becomes very difficult to expand to the rest of the world. I used to say that one of the problems in New York City was that there are so many people - it's just too hard to extend all the way out to everybody. Also once you make a decision this is what I should do [taps on the table], you make the first decision like that and you can't get off. It's a conscious effort to get off because you go all the way down.  
(Gathering # 7, 03/21/2012)

The *hevvruta* experiential activity was to look at a picture of the Lincoln Monument and *interpret* the hands gestures of the statue of Abraham Lincoln, from the viewpoint of actions and beliefs often associated with the Left (or prophetic) and the Right (or Constantinian) political spectrums. The picture of the Lincoln Monument shows one hand open and one clenched. The conversation below is an example of the flow of many of the *gatherings*:

Lena: His hand is like this - one hand...

Nancy: And one hand open!

Lena: Your hand is like that. Clenched. Like it's the law. It's the rules. The other one could be forgiveness, you know. That is the way I look at it.

Tali: I didn't even look at the hands. I just think about what I associate with Abraham Lincoln. And what he stood for. And I would sooner say more things on the *Left* than the *Right*.

John: He did a lot of things on the *Right*.

Tali: Okay, but I guess what I learned in school was more focused on *Left* side of it - how generous - the quality of freedom, and so forth. So...

John: I give you my open hand - I hope you don't reject it.

Tali: But it's funny how it's not an open hand. It's not one hand like this and the other like that [she places one palm up and one down]. It's down.

Ron: Right.

Tali: One clenched and one's...

Lena: It's like relaxed. I mean it's like "everything's ok! Everything will be fine! Don't worry!" On the other hand... is "I'll do it! I'm going to free the slaves. I'm going to do it!"

Tali: I want to talk about his, not his indecisiveness, but his...

John: Duality.

Tali: His duality or his, his...

Ron: Are we creating significance or is there significance in it already?

John: I like it was done purposefully.

Ron: Deliberately?

Lena: It was done purposely.

Tali: Do we know the person who created it?

Lena: The thing is that when children go to Washington, DC, they don't really discuss that.

Nancy: I never knew that!

Vivian: How many times I have seen this in my lifetime and this is the first time it's been called to my attention.

Lena: I've never seen it!  
(Lots of crossed talking)

Lena: You made me aware of it!

Vivian: I wasn't aware of it and I was there two years ago.

John: Well, you saw it. You just didn't think about it until someone points it out. When someone says, "Tell me what you see," your attention is drawn to it. And that is when you notice. Otherwise you would never notice that.

Nancy: It's the opposing. It's wonderful! (Gathering # 7, 03/21/2012)

Nancy expressed what the participants talked about for weeks - being able to see multiple perspectives at once is a wonderful experience. When the session was over, no one wanted to leave. The participants stated their desire to continue with these monthly *gatherings* in addition to their service and other reflections, in the future, after completion of the dissertation Project.

#### **Four Month Post-Gathering Survey and Individual Follow-Up Interviews**

Date: July 2012

Number of Participants: Eleven

Topic: Survey of *Project* components

Process: After the last *gathering* in March, there was an opportunity for participants to share feedback about the *Project*. All the participants said how much they enjoyed it but gave no particulars. As part of *action research*, the participants were also asked to write an evaluation of the *Project* - their service, their reflection, and their learning. On purpose, no formal structure or questions were provided beyond the statement, "Tell me about your experience and process in this *Project*," but the participants were asked to be as honest as possible so that the *Project* could be as beneficial and meaningful as possible for them and future participants. Only four of the participants



sent me an evaluation within the following week. For instance, John wrote his on evaluation:

Dear Gail, I believe that your presentation was well thought out and presented with appropriate references and groupings. For what it's worth I think your project has merit. Yours truly, J (John, evaluation e-mail, 03/28/2012)

Most of the participants requested a formal survey. Therefore, I drafted one that specifically asked the questions that were part of the Research Questions. The survey, which was an afterthought and part of the *action research* process, was administered four months after completion of the *Project*, as a means of obtaining valuable evaluation information and as a means of confirming the data observed (the entire original survey and a table of all of the results of the survey are found in Appendices D and E).

Each question on the survey had an option of *yes*, *no*, or *maybe* and/ or a comment section to further elaborate each answer. In Table 1 (below) are some of the results discovered by the four-month post-gathering survey. All 11 participants completed the survey, although particular questions may not have been answered. The first column is the survey question. The following three columns show how many participants responded to that particular question in the affirmative, negative, or neutral position.

Table 1. Results of Four-Month Post-Gathering Follow-Up Survey (Abbreviated)

Questions asked on 4 month post-study survey	Yes	No	Maybe
Were you concerned about “going back to school”?	2	8	1
Do you feel the classroom sessions were too easy, just right, or too difficult?	11 (just right)	0 (easy)	0 (difficult)
Do you feel that you experienced service-learning on this project?	6	4	1
Did you understand the action-oriented tenets of Jewish epistemology (ways of knowing)?	8	1	2
Was the service in this project meaningful to you?	8	2	1
Was service in this project meaningful to your organization?	8	1	2
Was service in this project meaningful to community?	8	0	3
Do you feel greater commitment to your service/ volunteering?	6	3	2
Was the education/ learning in this project meaningful to you?	11	0	0
Did you enjoy the experiential activities during class?	10	0	1
Were the handouts helpful?	8	1	1
Did you find that the activities and texts that we studied tied in with the Jewish concepts presented?	10	0	0
Do you feel a greater commitment to your learning?	3	3	2
Do you feel you are more compassionate toward others since attending this project?	4	6	1
Do you feel more connected to community since attending this project?	3	6	2
Do you feel more personal fulfillment and satisfaction with your volunteering and service since attending this project?	7	3	1
Do you think you grew as a person?	3	3	4
Would you like to continue this project?	11	0	0
Do you prefer to meet monthly for these gatherings?	10	0	0
Did you tell your family and friends about the project?	6	4	0

*Note:* Survey questions based on the research questions and questions identified by the participants. The comment sections were not included in this table due to space limitations, but are mentioned below.

According to the results of the survey, all of the participants felt that the sessions were set well to their intellectual levels of understanding, although they commented that some decreased concentration and memory issues surfaced. More than half of the participants stated that they had an authentic service-learning experience, but noted that there was a greater focus on the learning portion than on the service. They claimed that the best ways to reflect were (in descending order) discussion, thinking on own, writing e-mails, and the least utilized ways were through writing on handouts, talking with friends/family, and that journaling was the least used reflection modality by this group. More than three-quarters of the participants felt they understood action-oriented Jewish values and ways of knowing, although one person observed that many of these values are “not just Jewish.”

The vast majority of the participants felt the *Project* was meaningful to them, to their organizations, and to the community. A little more than half of the participants felt a greater commitment to service since beginning the *Project*, and all claimed that the learning in the *Project* was meaningful to them. They especially commented that they enjoyed listening to other people. Most of the participants reported that they enjoyed the experiential activities, that the handouts were helpful, especially for referring back to, and that they felt the activities and texts tied into the Jewish concepts.

Regarding whether they felt that the *Project* increased their commitment to learning, the respondents were split - 3 said *yes*, 3 said *no*, and 2 said *maybe*. The participants' comments were that they were already *committed* to their learning. There was also a split regarding whether participation in the *Project* caused the participants to

feel more compassionate towards others – 4 *yes*, 6 *no* and 1 *maybe* – with a majority of the participants stating that they were already compassionate. For the same reasons there was also a split as to whether the participants felt more connected to community as part of the *Project* – 3 *yes*, 6 *no*, and 2 *maybe* – since the participants claimed they were already connected. Most of the participants felt the *Project* lead to more personal fulfillment and satisfaction, but they were split in stating whether they felt it helped them grow as people.

What the participants liked best about the *Project* was (in their exact phraseology) being in a classroom, listening to others and what they do, meeting and being together with the group, having discussions, being involved in discussions on many topics, helping out, seeing multi-opinions, being a part of a group, seeing the people who participated, participating in the group activities, being with people like me and appreciating others who like to do things that I do. The participants least liked (their phraseology again) the shortness and smallness of group, trying to answering questions I did not know the answers to, the frustration of things I can't do anymore, having to write, feeling inadequate in ability to volunteer, and the inconvenient times of the classroom sessions. As mentioned above, all the participants want to continue being part of the *Project*.

The survey also provided clear consensus that the most popular and best tolerated duration of time for *gatherings* is 1 hour, the best day of the week for *gatherings* is Wednesday afternoon, and the preferred frequency of the *gatherings* is monthly. A majority of the participants told their family and friends about the *Project*. Other

comments included that the *Project* provided participants with a place to go where people can meet, and offered them something to think about and something to learn. One respondent wrote, “I believe that every Jewish community organization should avail themselves [SIC] of this opportunity.” The results of this survey line up with the results that the researcher *discovered* from observations during the *gatherings* and the five months of that portion of the process. This survey also helped form and clarify the themes, as did the results of the member-check *gathering*.

### **One-Year Post-Gathering Member-Check Party**

Date: January 9, 2013  
Number of Participants: Eight  
Topic: Member-check

Process: A little over a year after the beginning of the first *gathering*, I invited the participants to a member-check feast. In keeping with the theme of hospitality, we *noshed* (ate) while we discussed the results of the research. Additional feedback was solicited and updates were made, as needed, to the data, to the analyses, and to the findings. Most of the corrections were minor things related to demographics, including choice of pseudonym, timelines, and background information on participants. Those who were not able to attend were contacted individually, given copies of the results, and had opportunities to comment on them. Tali’s comments were indicative of most of the participants’ opinions:

You can still grow no matter how old you are, in relationship to knowledge, and feelings for others. I liked that very much. I like to think that life can be more meaningful as we grow older. It was good to be part of this and the focus on

seniors, because seniors, the geriatric age is increasing. I'm more in that population. I love that I can think and broaden my outlook. It made me feel good because I could think and analyze and put both together as I get older. I'm still okay! I can still think and that made me feel really good. It was a very worthwhile on a personal level. (Tali, individual member-check, 01/18/2013)

A number of the participants asked to read the entire dissertation, which was provided to them in digital format. Two participants read the entire tome, and stated afterwards that they agreed with all the content. In keeping with service-learning praxis, some of the participants presented their experiences, reflections, and recommendation from participation in the study to the Board Members of *The Agency* at the February 5, 2013 Board meeting. The participants expressed their engagement and growth from the process and recommended continuing this *Project* model. One participant explained how during the process she re-discovered her brain, "taking it off the shelf" (Sara, personal statement, 02/05/13) as part of the *Project* process, to transfer and transform her power and service from her body to her mind. The Board Members stated their appreciation of having such a *Project* in the community and unanimously agreed to its continuation.

### **Common Themes**

Despite all the obstacles and barriers mentioned in the previous chapter regarding the creation and study of the *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning Project*, many new avenues opened up on which to travel. Many recurrent themes materialized from analyzing the data obtained from the *gatherings*, writings, journals, e-mails, discussions, and other comments. The common themes are elucidated by the participants (re)presented in their exact words, along with my comments on the themes, and any

added scholarly updates on the topic. In this next section we take a tour of the findings from analyses of data of the *Project*.

### **Theme One: The Value of Pleasure in Service, Learning, and Reflection**

Helping makes me feel good! (*Project* participant)

Self-value and self-identification for the participants appeared to be tied not only to individualistic experiences and group norms but also to “feeling good” about these personal experiences and community standards. All of the participants mentioned how *good* they felt during this process, including the service, learning, and reflection that became intermingled:

My volunteer experiences cover a number of agencies, most of them in North Carolina. Since I have been retired, one of my greatest pleasures has been to have time to pick and choose what I do with my free time. I found that volunteering soon relieved me of my free time. I say this jokingly because volunteering enhances my life. Volunteering allows you to give of yourself without personal gain. And it makes you feel good about yourself. (Gillian, Gathering # 4, 12/14/2011)

Gillian continued to list the communities she serves and ended her reflection with “I now gave back to the community for free. It’s a great feeling!” Many of these adults have had to delay their personal and communal longings, and wait for the day they could retire and transition to a new *reality* with a more personal focus. John articulated these pleasures when he wrote:

I thoroughly enjoyed participating in your project on a variety of levels. The first of which is that I love participating in discussion groups, especially when I find the topic interesting, which I did with yours. Secondly because I learned

something new and actually spent time looking up and even reading about the topics you brought up with respect to Service Learning. I also did some research on the people and books included in your presentation. Thirdly because it got me to again think about why I do some of the things I do which wasn't necessarily narrowed down to my volunteering activities. My only regret is that I missed your first session. (John, 03/28/2012, e-mail)

Here is an excerpt from one of Nancy's e-mails about that pleasure rush from service-learning:

Sam and I spent Friday afternoon volunteering at the free dental clinic. It is an amazing setup. Forty nine dentists volunteered their time to clean, extract and fill teeth. Most of them worked a ten hour shift. All of this while standing on a concrete floor. I was at the desk putting on color coded wrist bands and directing patients to the correct waiting area. It was a wonderful feeling watching such a diverse group of volunteers working together to service about 500 people. The patients were treated with dignity and kindness. And I was so impressed with the patience and gratefulness of the people we helped. Some of them waited in the cold all night. Not one complained. Even when told to come back on Saturday. I loved being part of the action. Keeping busy, being helpful. What a wonderful feeling! Nancy (e-mail, 11/12/2011)

Compare this *feeling good* with the experiences of Sara who no longer feels that pleasure.

This is an excerpt from one of the *gatherings* and shows how the participants sought to help her process her diminished abilities in order to see her positive impact:

Sara: And I don't feel like I belong here... I feel I'm a fraud if I'm here.

Gail: Okay, and in what way?

Sara: Because I'm not doing volunteer work in the same sense.

Vivian: But you are doing volunteer work. You help us with the senior luncheons.

Sara: But that's not the same kind of thing.



John: Everything is -.

Sara: That is within the community.

Nancy: Are you getting paid for it?

Sara: No!

Carol: If you're not getting paid for its volunteer work. [Laughter]

Nancy: We're all volunteers.

Carol: It's work if you're doing something. But it doesn't have to be negative. What you are doing doesn't have to be something you don't like to do. That's not what work is! Work is accomplishing something. Doing something, and volunteer work is doing it without being paid. (Gathering # 5, 01/31/2012)

It is that sense of accomplishment that can bring intense pleasure. Sara feels that she is no longer accomplishing to her previous high level of service so she discounts the entire experience. The pleasure within Nancy's description of her service-learning experience is as palpable as the suffering described in Sara's perceived lack of *service-learning*.

Service-learning modalities might have the potential to transform reduced *volunteer* status into an improved *service-learning* standing. Otherwise, within service-learning projects, these perceived declines in impacts and outputs will not only negatively affect the pleasure but create the potential of producing images of self as the *Other*, especially in this transition and identity formation period.

For instance, Vivian, now 90 years old, had not been involved in service activities until she turned 86. When reporting on one of her service activities, she commented:

I don't think of it as I'm a better person. It makes me feel good and so in that way, it's done. You don't think of, "what can I do instead of this" or "is it taking away from something else?" I'm happy to do it. And sitting around, like I did with

Marjorie and a couple of other people two years in a row, and just sitting there you schmooze a little bit and you write, and this and that, and it's evidently a good thing happening. But I didn't look at it that way. I was having fun. (Vivian, 11/30/2011, Gathering # 3)

The participants often brought up the idea of charity, which is related to the Jewish concept of *Tzedakah* – Justice:

Nancy: Let me ask you something. When we talk in terms of charity, are we only talking in terms of monetary charity? When I, when I, uh, well, years ago I used to be what they called a gray lady or a pink lady over at [WL] Hospital. I didn't know the people that I would go over to help, and this lady would ask me to write a letter or brush her hair. Or whatever we did for the patients. I didn't know her. She didn't know me. But I, but I, was that charitable?

Gillian: Yes, then it was a charitable act. So is volunteer work.

Nancy: So volunteer work is, um hm, right.

Ron: But what we're inclined to see is we're seeing it as charity is money.

Tali: That's what a lot of people think but charity is not always money.

Nancy: But we've been seeing it that way. Up until now. Up 'til now. Until I opened my mouth. (Gathering # 2, 11/16/2011)

The participants had not considered their service as a subcategory of charity – for them charity had come to mean exclusively a monetary donation. However, they came to recognize and understand new simultaneously held meanings of charity. These discussions helped the participants to reflect deeply on their service and their actions. They received support, acknowledgement, confirmation and connection - all of which can lead to pleasure for individuals. In this way, service-learning activities are measured not only in terms of output and impact but of useful use of time. In addition, older people

have a different viewpoint of time - they stare at their mortality, and time passes more quickly. With a lifetime of experiences that have helped determine what these older adults want to and do not want to do, Ron said it the best when he expounded:

You come into a stage of life where you want do what you want to do. Not what you have to do. People are here because they want to be here. Now we want to go because we want to go! (Ron, Gathering #1, 11/09/2011)

Here is an excerpt from my journal about Nancy's new perspective on her time and the services she rendered:

I was totally shocked when Nancy told me that "because of the *Project*" she quit many of her usual volunteer activities. In our community, she is known as a dynamo and therefore her services are in high demand. At first I felt quite guilty and questioned the direction of the study. But then she explained to me that she quit those activities that were passionless and meaningless to her. Those activities no longer benefited her or the other agencies since she was not giving fully of herself. She said she had a nagging feeling about her service at those agencies for a very long period of time but was unable to put a label or disposition on that feeling. Through the *Project*, she started to critically question and explore why she provided service, what impact she was having on the various agencies she served, and what she wanted to accomplish through her volunteer and service activities. Since she quit providing service at certain agencies, she feels much more satisfied now in her service that she has retained. I saw her move from *busy* to *productive* in her service activities and attitude. This is a lesson I need to visit, struggle with, and act upon - my tendency towards generating busywork instead of being more strategic and reflective in my choices in my own service and learning. I wonder - in my desire to help so many, am I doing damage to myself and others when I spread myself too thin? (Gail, journal, 12/07/2011)

## **Theme Two: The Value of Relationships and Connections in Community Building**

And they said, "You're a mother and she's a mother. And that would be enough to create a starting point to connect." From there, somehow I was able to build a relationship with these women that in my ordinary life I would have absolutely nothing in common with. (*Project* participant)

The value of relationships in all their forms – networking, socializing and connecting – was a frequently expressed theme during the study. Whether participants chose a Buberian *I-Thou* perspective or a Levinas *Responsibility for the Other without expectation of reciprocity* approach or other approaches to human interaction, the theme of relationships and connections were highly personal and essential for the participants. Here is an excerpt from Sara's journal that speaks about relationships:

When I was in my early 20's, I was a caseworker in urban renewal projects in NY. At that time, I related with a lot of my client as "I-thou" and found myself often emotionally involved. Over the years, I began to realize that such involvement can cause emotional distress and learned to remove myself slightly from the situations and the people. Levinas' "other" seemed a better fit and that has continued to be how I conduct my relationship with those I would volunteer. After I had my children, my volunteerism centered around their schools and the Temple. I had a tendency to become overcommitted but enjoyed what I was doing. There was no reason to do except it always seemed as if it was the right thing to do. I stopped doing any kind of volunteerism when I started working again in my own business. Physically and emotionally, I had just a limited amount of energy and tried to be careful not to overdo. Stress, both physically and mentally, is detrimental to me physically as I have a chronic illness. Now that we are retired, I have slowly started to find situations in which I can help. The senior lunches, mitzvah day, and the senior newsletter, have been the extent of my involvement so far. These volunteer efforts don't call on any "I-thou" involvements. I guess the "other" is more relevant. However, these efforts do not involve any ethical or altruistic motives. It just seems like a good way to give back to the community and meet others, so it's a more selfish motive than an altruistic one. I'm also enjoying the fact that John and I do these things together whereas, in our earlier years, it was a solo effort for me. I feel guilty that I don't have the desire or the energy at this time in my life to do more volunteer work in the community at large. That to me is a moral and ethical duty, but I console myself that donations and well wishes will have to suffice. (Sara, 02/20/2012, journal entry, via e-mail)

Her husband, John, also wrote to me on the same topic - relationships - but showed a different perspective than his wife:

Relationships: I don't think about or treat people with whom I volunteer or those I volunteer to help, any differently than I think or treat people in general. I tend to be myself almost all of the time and in general don't make allowances for people other than trying not to be condescending (not always successful). When I was younger and engaged with my career, my wife used to say that I was a different person based on who I was with and what we were doing. Since I've retired, I do try to control my natural impulses when it concerns family. [Regarding] Buber - I view all my relationships as I – I. [Regarding] Levinas – I subscribe to the Gaia Hypothesis and see the world as a single interdependent and interrelated essentially closed system and therefore don't, philosophically speaking, recognize "the other" as theoretically - the other is simply an extension of me. I do view "man" as having "free will", not trapped as say a scorpion by his "nature", thus putting an onus on "man" to behave in an ethical manner. [Regarding] Bible/god – I don't believe in god, have little use for religion - and the concept of a "divine spark" is both foreign and meaningless. (John, e-mail, 01/31/2012)

These e-mails feature the idea that relationships, even within long-term spousal arrangements, can be vastly different in their viewpoints of the *Other*, and each *Other*, and are paramount in scope in their multiplicity. The concept of *Otherness* took the discussion of relationships to new levels. Here is a conversation that took place when the topic was in reference to *Otherness* and the term *significant Other* was mentioned:

Tali: As long as each of us is an individual to some extent, there's always, even within the closest person who you love and care about, there is *Otherness* and difference. There will always be different thoughts about *Others*. There will always be something *Other*. How about the term "significant *Other*"?

Nancy: Right! There will always be something *Other*!

Sara: Sometimes when there are couples who go together, who are not married, when they are dating, they will refer to their person as "significant *Other*."

Naomi: There you go!

Sara: Why do you suppose they don't use the word partner, perhaps, or lover?

Nancy: Can I give you a list Ron? [laughing]

Ron: We already have a list! [all participants laugh] (Gathering # 6, 02/21/2012)

I feel that these older participants might bring a different perspective to the reflective conversations than younger people, particularly based on their life experiences and the nuances in life and language that they have had to navigate.

In addressing the question of what constitutes community, the definition was broadened to encompass more community connections. Nancy found her community need and filled it, without having to work through an agency to determine the need. A number of people who knit for numerous agencies were unhappy with their present venue but no one was doing anything about it until Nancy took control. She organized a venue change based on her relationships:

The Knitters got off to a great start this morning. The Brides Room was bright and roomy and a table was put in for us to sit at. There was enough room in the storage closet for the extra yarn. We have decided to meet at 10:30 AM and then go on to V [the senior program] for the \$2 lunch and the program. Hope you can join us. (Nancy, 03/20/2012, e-mail)

On a follow-up e-mail, she wrote:

The Knitters are doing just fine. The Rabbi was so delighted about our project that he offered to fund our yarn purchases from the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. We are about 6 to 8 knitters and it is a very upbeat time on Tuesday mornings. Then on to lunch at the senior group. I got it started there. A lot of pleasure from little effort from me. (Nancy, 05/08/2012, e-mails)

Given that service-learning places students in often intense relationship dynamics with agencies, clients, and other students, emotions are bound to be part of the process.

Relationships with other learners is an important part of the service-learning process, and developing friendships, at any age, is an anticipated consideration:

You know, we're not going to have million friends at our age. Because we can't do a lot of the things that we did when we were younger. But we are, we should be able to make some friends, 2 or 3 that we can call and buddy up with. You know the old joke? Whoever has a car is your friend! [laughter] (Gillian, Gathering #4, 12/14/2011)

The formation of relationships can create intense pleasure, was noted earlier, but they can also create other emotional responses. For instance, at times the participants observed that they held back in relationships to clients to preserve their emotional keel and identity. The following discussion highlights this cognitive exploration of emotional response:

Sara: But this kind of thing...I started to put in my thing [journal]. Martin Buber, I-Thou, cannot work in certain situations. It's just...it's an emotional impossibility. Because it's like the doctor or the psychiatrist or whatever whoever, who gets involved with every single patient emotionally on an I-Thou basis - wouldn't last more than a year or two. You have to have a degree of separation, in order to survive and in order to be able to function in that situation.

John: I don't know if you have to be ...It has to be emotional situation, in terms of I-Thou, you just simply recognize it... and I recognize that that is another individual, whose values ultimately are relative between people. And not getting into philosophical discussions about absolutes - so I don't, I don't know...

Sara: But I don't think Otherness precludes that.

John: Precludes what?

Sara: The recognition that someone else is a person. I don't think the Otherness that you're talking about precludes that. I think there's a difference. The difference that you're talking about, when you talk about, about pity or looking down on someone and being sanctimonious and being the high person who's

deigning to give someone help. That's a totally different thing. And I think that is separate from Otherness too. I don't think that counts in terms of volunteerism. That's truly selfish.

John: It's certainly better than nothing. If, if somebody has nothing to eat, even if you have a haughty attitude, and you manage to give them food there is still some benefits - it may not be as ...it may be marginal compared to other types of benefits that you can find, but it's still...it's still, from the wall, it's still a step away from the wall. When I volunteer I don't necessarily think in terms of emotion one way or the other. I tend to interact and treat all people pretty much the same, equal to standards...

Nancy: But have you been in situations in volunteering where the people are homeless or...

John: I've been in situations... (Gathering # 2, 11/16/2011)

These emotional reactions were further explored and deconstructed through language, phraseology, or terminology. Ron (02/21/2012) often used the terms *standards of civilization* and *underprivileged* when he spoke. These were the terms he grew up with and referenced throughout his life, not realizing through his White privilege that there might be other standards of civilization. These were previously oblivious to him and therefore not scrutinized. The good news is that since he never heard of the term *Otherness* he was able to identify and embody the concept of Otherness without any strong negative emotions or hegemonic connotations that surrounded his previous vocabulary and reality. Of course, there were many words that carried hegemonic or preconceived connotations for the participants. Some of those *loaded* words were *Justice* and *Truth*. The words were loaded because they had previously carried one single definition. That was shattered when the participants discovered multiple meanings to words and ideas by listening, sharing, and reflecting. That leads us to our third theme.



### Theme Three: The Value of Multiple Perspectives

It was an informed decision. I mean, at least they knew both sides of it. (*Project Participant*)

Scientific inquiry and the age of reason sought to uncover ultimate Truths. That was the way these mature adults were raised. However, in our contemporary post-modern society, there are often multiple and conflicting truths. The participants uncovered this during the *Project* process. The idea of multiple perspectives has also been touched upon in some of the previous themes.

Reflection, as one of the hallmarks of service-learning, was one of the centerpieces of the *gatherings* and the process. The reflection portion of the *Project* did not progress as I had envisioned, especially related to journal writing - or lack of this activity. In identifying the best ways to reflect in the *Project*, the participants rated the discussions as their number one choice, followed by thinking about it on their own, talking with friends and family, and writing an e-mail. As mentioned previously, having to write, especially in a journal, was an unforeseen issue for the participants and the mandatory nature of journal writing was dropped. However, participants did provide Technical, Practical, *AND* Critical (self) reflection in their individual thought processes, their writings, and their discussions. (Please refer to the Critical Reflection Handout adapted from Kath Fisher, 2012, which is in Appendix B). Ron commented:

I thank Hashem [God] every day that I'm at where I'm at now. Just when I was starting my new life when I retired Hashem does things in unexplained ways. You remember when I first retired and moved to America? I needed surgery and I thought my life was over. And now look at me. I enjoyed the sessions very much

and I was taken by your ways. It is interesting that I have remnants of our discussions and how it is imbedded in our minds. And how it carried forward in Tali's life. I get sentimental thinking about it. It was a very practical and constructive personal experience. I enjoyed hearing what others had to say. I liked the way you controlled the meeting - you gave everyone an opportunity to present their thoughts, summed it up, and moved on. As someone who never volunteered, you are able to edge me into volunteering opportunities. I came to the sessions because of you, Gail, to help you, but I think it helped me even more. I'm amazed at what you manage to achieve. You don't know the way it is at times - you feel dumb and stupid but Gail was in control and knowing. You gave me an introduction to that way of life. When I went I gained much from it. It was great to hear the opinions from other people. I have the strength of my convictions but you showed that we can respect yours and mine as well. It is different when I go to the she'urs [lessons] at the Tuesday [Bible Study] group. (Ron, four month follow-up survey interview, 08/01/2012)

When asked at the final survey if they felt they had experienced the service-learning combination of authentic service, academic learning, and personal reflection, six participants felt that they had and one said that maybe they had experienced this combination. Four of the participants felt they had not experienced this combination, rating the only area lacking as *service*. It is interesting to note that these four older *service*-learners downgraded their service-learning experiences based on their feelings that their service was not to the same level, duration, intensity, productivity, or need as when they were younger. In comparing their present life with their past service activities, these four people negated the entire service-learning experience from a perspective of limitation, although other people might view their service more positively. Again, this highlights the stereotypes of learning and aging from the internal and external perspectives of older people, not only what society holds for aging.

There were multiple (and competing) perspectives on aging that the participants expressed before, during, and after the study. I did anticipate some memory issues.

There is a stereotype of older people *not being with it* or as slow; there is even the phrase in the English vernacular about *having a senior moment*. However, I hope I am as sharp in my 60s to 90s as most of these participants were. Of course, for some there were minor or short-term lapses; for others this was not an issue beyond an occasion cognitive search for most appropriate wording. These participants maintained their cognitive faculties, building on their experiences to process information in ways that are different and more holistic than in their youth. Gillian wrote, “You can always learn!” (07/25/2012, survey), John explained that one should “always seeking to learn” (07/10/2012, survey), and Vivian clarified that “every learning situation is advantageous” (07/21/2012, survey).

Unfortunately, sometimes these older adults bought into popular stereotypes of older adults, and therefore themselves, as slow, as antique, as worn-out, as useless, as *over the hill*. Not only was this an issue very much on the minds of the participants, it was also on the mind of other researchers and in the literature. Especially at the beginning of the *Project* process, when there was so much information presented that scaffolded onto the next topic, it was difficult to absorb everything. As per Tate (2004) for adults “strategies such as graphic organizers, metaphors, movement, music, and storytelling are simply more effective than long lectures and inactive participants” (Tate, 2004, p. xvi).

This need for multiple styles of learning has been additionally corroborated by neuroscientists and educational consultants, which reveal that real-world learning changes behaviors and dendrites (memory cells) (Tate, 2004, p. xvi). Unfortunately:

although there is great evidence that learning continues throughout all life stages for most people, we nevertheless view the world and function within powerful

frames of reference, one of which links learning and youth. (Elcott & Himmelfarb, 2012, p. 198)

This was starkly shown in the frames of reference of the participants themselves, who have bought into the idea of decreased learning potential, despite evidence to the contrary.

I would say that only two participants seemed to have delays in their responses. One participant admitted having some memory changes following recent surgery and anesthesia, and another one often commented on a discussion thread a minute or so following completion of a specific line of thought. This was usually related to holistic processing practices and disruption of previous held views. I made sure to utilize metaphors in the learning at *gatherings* since research shows that thinking and understanding are stretched by metaphorical connections, that metaphors make learning more memorable, that metaphors help acquire meaning by constructing new knowledge linkages to old knowledge, that metaphors help tie concepts into personal experiences, and that metaphors might even increase brain neurons (Tate, 2004, p. 44). I also looked for metaphors in the data and for analysis of that data. For instance, some of the participants referred to learning about their Jewish values as a biological transfer system explaining that “it was something like osmosis coming through your skin. It wasn't said in anyway. It was there! And you absorbed it. And here I am - going to be 90” (Vivian, Gathering # 3, 11/30/2011). Engaging in dialogue is indeed a powerful act! Brock (2005) believes that dialogue is the central focus of pedagogy, and I add, andragogy.

This might be representative of only this sample of mostly educated middle class white adults, but it would be interesting to try this *Project* with other populations.

#### **Theme Four: The Values of Compassion**

Yeah, but not everybody has that compassion, or has that capacity. (*Project Participant*)

The concept of compassion obviously ran through the entire *Project*. Not only was compassion explicitly discussed through the Jewish value of *Rahmanut*, and through the research question, it was also subtly and not-so-subtly, implicitly and explicitly, shown in the service portion of the service-learning. For the participants, being of service and having compassion are paired. Yet, the term *compassion* is difficult to define. Everyone has a personal viewpoint of what compassion is and what it is not, and if it is innate or learned. In one particular *gathering*, when the participants struggled with the idea of whether compassion is inborn or acculturated, the participants came to a consensus through the reflective discussion that it is a combination of *both* nature AND nurture. However, there was a struggle in identifying the best age period or pathway towards learning compassion. Most questioned if adults, and especially older adults, can learn to be compassionate, or even more compassionate than they are already. However, the results of the *Project* process and the survey showed that compassion can be learned and even increased in older age.

When asked if they felt they were more compassionate towards others since attending this *Project*, half of the participants did not think so, stating that there were already very compassionate. For instance Nancy explained “I’m always compassionate

and it is part of me. However, I can only repair my little bit of the world” (four month survey, 07/30/2012) and Vivian added “I have always been [compassionate] – my family was my role model and taught me my values, one of which was compassion” (four month survey, 07/21/2012). Since the participants viewed their compassion as already high, claiming that it was their compassion that made them become volunteers and provide service in the first place, their compassion could not increase or rise higher. The participants already *felt good* that they experienced compassion. Yet how is it that half of the participants, who also self-reported as compassionate people, described an increase in their compassion? The data seem to point to compassion on a continuum scale which is nurtured or starved by our experiences. As Mary noted, “I have more compassion when I see people worse than me” (four-month survey, 07/11/2012).

During the *gatherings*, the idea of compassion was organically explored from many angles. It is beyond this chapter to explore all aspects of compassion, a topic that would require a separate dissertation. This is how the participants viewed it - from a diversity of opinions. Below is an excerpt from one of the many dialogues about compassion, generated by the participants. I did not participate in or direct this conversation:

Nancy: I want to ask a question of the group - can you learn compassion?

Ron: Do what?

Nancy: Can you learn it? Because I find in some situations, I can see a situation and I will react to it. But the people around me can look at the exact same situation and they don't see it at all.

Tali: I think it needs to begin when you're very young.

Anna: When you teach children to, um, to understand what is happening with someone else. Or the, their dog, or the neighbor that needs to be visited, or...

Nancy: That's the model. That's really teaching it by modeling.

Tali: Right. But you're teaching them. I think you're born, you know, with compassion.

Ron: It depends on how your family brought you up!

Nancy: You're, you're a product of your environment?

Anna: And some people didn't have that in their lives growing up.

Nancy: And some people do seem to learn it without, by virtue of, just live it. I find it; I'll see something and I'll have a feeling that I have to act on.

Tali: Yeah. (Gathering #1. 11/09/2011)

In asking in the research question if the *Project* "increased compassion towards others" the participants often tied the concept of compassion to *feeling good*. They considered that if one never felt *good* related to compassionate thought or action it might be because compassion was never discussed, valued, or experienced in households, in schools, in our institutions, in our communities, or in our societies. This then might explain why the pleasure of greed has replaced the pleasure of compassion and the *feeling good* that it can evoke. Service-learning might increase compassion by giving people of all ages an opportunity to *feel good* and the reinforcement of pleasure in enacting this principle. However, for older persons, this *feeling good* aspect might be modulated by *feeling bad* about not being able to *do* more in the service portion of service-learning. These negative or at least reality perceptions of decline related to previous service had a perceptible effect on the perception of the service-learner.

Sara wrote about her own process of developing compassion or caring, as well as her viewpoints on learning to be compassionate:

I found this project very thought provoking. Examining my reasons (mostly in the past) for doing volunteer work is not something I would normally have done. My personal history growing up did not provide me with role models for volunteerism. So why had I gotten involved? The only thing I have come up with is that my work [social work] after graduation, which involved areas of the city (NYC) that I would not, under normal circumstances, have had exposure to. I had never seen how the poor, the underprivileged, the ghettoites [sp] or the very poor elderly had to struggle to survive, or the conditions in which they lived. It had horrified me that such a large segment of the population “lived” like that. I did not come from money but I came from an educated middle class Jewish home. It made me feel guilty. When I had my children, it became evident that that “guilt” not only colored my politics but also my actions, school and the Jewish institutions in my life became the places through which my volunteerism evolved. I know that “Tikkun Olam” was a guiding principle but more so was a feeling of indebtedness. I had so much, they had so little. I owed them a helping hand to balance things. I think you can teach children and teens and young adults through service learning, but I’m not so sure about seniors. Learning to care comes early, later one can espouse empathy but I’m not sure it becomes engrained in you. Those who reach retirement without the empathy are not very likely to volunteer. Even within the Jewish community, it is often always the same people who volunteer all the time for all different kinds of things. The need to give a helping hand is I think a natural instinct with some just as expecting to be “helped” or served is with others. Your project hopes that some can be taught volunteerism and service through religious and philosophical teachings; I think that those who seek that kind of learning in later years already have the inclinations to do so. The teachings would just reinforce what is already present. (Sara, 03/28/2012, e-mail evaluation)

On the other hand, at evaluation time, Tali explained how her compassionate actions increased from participation in the study and the critical reflection of compassion and justice:

I enjoyed the intellectual stimulation. The thing I really remember was the topic of the *Tzedakah* and the different levels according to the Rambam. This influenced my compassion tremendously. I recently had a choice when I gave to charity, and was the first time in my life I gave anonymously. It made me feel very good. I was surprised how the topics connected to me very personally. I



also felt that as you get older you still need to have intellectual stimulation and I felt that you conducted the sessions very well. You handled the discussions beautifully and you gave each person time to respond and share their thoughts.  
(08/01/2012)

The participants had much to say about the world, to each other, and in regards to the Project. They broadened their viewpoints while sharing the process with each other and with this researcher. They felt free to discuss any topic, ask questions, and wrestle together. And they enjoyed the process.

### **Summary**

This study began by describing the devaluation of certain segments of the populations (older/ mature adults) and tenets (Jewish social justice and action values) in our society. This chapter ends with the identification of the value of pleasure, multiple ways of knowing, relationships and community connections, and compassion for older people in our society - in service, in learning, and in reflection. These themes emerged from the data created by the participants as the *Project* was studied.

It turned out that the process of the *Project* was an enjoyable, relationship laden, multi-perspective, and caring exercise. The participants often mentioned *feeling good* about their service (helping others), their learning (making new connections to previous ideas and experiences), and their reflection (experiencing insights and change). They demonstrated these by their words, and their actions. They surprised themselves and each other in their abilities to transcend age and physicality. They shared questions never asked and thoughts never expressed. They liked being in a classroom setting that was vastly different from that of youth, listening to others while being heard, being part of

something bigger than themselves, finding commonalities and appreciating differences, using the cognitive (dialoguing and reflecting) and the emotional (experiencing and caring).

In keeping with the ideas of adult education, I would like to frame these results through the six core principles of andragogy. For review, the assertion of these core values are that 1) adults need to know why they need to learn something before learning it, 2) the self-concept of adults is heavily dependent upon a move towards self-direction, 3) prior experiences of the learner provide a rich resource for learning, 4) adults typically become ready to learn when they experience the need to cope with a life situation or perform a task, 5) adults' orientation to learning is life-centered; education is a process of developing increased competency levels to achieve their full potential, 6) the motivation for adult learner is internal rather than external (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2011, p.156). The participants demonstrated these codes by 1) understanding the benefits of Jewish epistemology before they embraced the specific values and ways of knowing to learn and emulate, 2) formulating new self-concepts through self-direction, 3) sharing their prior *learning* experiences as material for future learning, 4) performing service as a pathway and vehicle for learning, 5) developing new and expanded capabilities beyond physicality to reach their fuller life potentials, and 6) developing and fostering internal processes of motivations. The findings show that adult learning, lifelong learning, and service-learning are not only possible, but meaningful, at any age.

These findings open up a pathway for exchange of ideas and practices regarding the education and service of older people. These include the benefits, and the

complications, of including more mature adults in educational and service-learning spheres. They point to the influence of these ideas in the shaping of programs and policies, as well as the daily lives of older people and those in contact with these more mature individuals. If one considers these values and their impact on society, this study becomes a call to action for people of all ages to rediscover their joy, their bonds, their multiple vistas, and their kindness. These rediscoveries will be discussed further in the following chapter.

In the next chapter, the results of this chapter will be discussed, recommendations made, and conclusions drawn. Based on the findings, the impact of this model and research study on theory and practice in secular and religious education and especially service-learning is discussed. The implications for further theory, practice, and research will be considered. Moral and ethical courses of action are established from these discoveries.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One should see the world, and see oneself as a scale with an equal balance of good and evil. When a person does one good deed the scale is tipped to the good – that person and the world is saved. When a person does one evil deed the scale is tipped to the bad – that person and the world is destroyed (Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Rules of Repentance, Hilhot Teshuvah 3:4).

In the preceding chapter, results for this *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning* process - referred to as the *Project* - were presented. Since the next step in the process is to synthesize these results, this chapter does so by presenting 1) a summary of the total study, 2) discussion of the findings, 3) conclusions, 4) implications for practice and policy, and 5) recommendations for further research. Its purpose is to expand on the findings of the study inform theoretical and practical aspects of secular and Jewish service-learning and ways of knowing.

This *Project* process, our journey together, began with an idea and ended with a fully implemented, functional, compassionate, enjoyable, multi-faceted, and linked *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning* “menu” that will continue with *gatherings* and evolutions at my place of employment. Each chapter’s material added to the formation of the *Project*. Each participant’s input contributed to the implementation, study, and results of the *Project*.

In the Prologue, I situated myself as a person, educator, and researcher, (I am a White, Jewish Woman, who is a lifelong learner, and interested in education and service for all age groups) and discussed my subjectivity (I feel the world needs to be a more compassionate and empathetic place, open to multiple and interesting ways of knowing that welcome and value respect and mutual dialogue). In Chapter I there were descriptions of the societal issues that framed the reasons for developing and researching the *Project*: devaluation of maturity, experience, personal meaning, community connections, critical action, and spiritual and moral principles. In Chapter II were the perspectives of secular and Jewish theories and practices in adult education, lifelong learning, and service-learning, such as the shift from teaching to self-directed learning, and emphasis on critical reflection. In Chapter III, the social-justice and social-action position of Jewish values and ways of knowing were identified and defined, such as *tikkun olam*, *tzedakah*, and *hesed*.

In Chapter IV, the processes and methods of creation and implementation of this *Project* were presented. The perspectives of the theories and practices presented in the previous chapters were merged for formation of a flexible model of progressive, social justice and action-oriented, learning and learner-centered, problem-based, personal development, integrated, experiential and cooperative educational liberatory itinerary. The qualitative applied research method of *action research* was identified, acknowledged, and utilized as the best way for studying the *Project*. In Chapter V, the findings, results, and analyses of the study were reported and common themes of the

value of pleasure, relationships and connections in community building, multiple perspectives, and compassion in service, learning and reflection were identified.

In this final chapter, I summarize and discuss the study, highlight implications for practice and policy, generate recommendations, and offer conclusions. In the expressed value of this framework, a moral and spiritual configuration can be extrapolated and integrated into service-learning theory and practice as well as other educational, sociocultural, political, and spiritual realms. The primary goal of this study was to look at volunteers who were transitioning into the third chapter of their lives – retirement. This is usually a period of time when many older people and their activities become *discarded* or devalued. Jewish values and ways of knowing were combined with service and reflective service-learning to understand if there was a deepening, transformation and/ or valuation of these activities, causing participants to increase their satisfaction, compassion, open-mindedness, and sense of community. These were the bases for the Research Questions, which kept me focused on the *Project*.

### **Research Questions and Answers**

In the beginning, there were the research questions. These questions paved the road on which we traveled. These questions became the vehicle propelling the research in the *Project*. For me, this trip was continually interesting and breathtaking.

Question one:

Does the inclusion of action-oriented tenets of Jewish epistemology, coupled with service-learning principles, increase the personal fulfillment, compassion towards others, and commitment to both service and learning of a volunteer community of mature adults?

seeks to discover if using Jewish values and ways of knowing in service-learning opportunities with older people (over the age of 50) increases these participants' sense of personal satisfaction, empathy and kindness towards other people, obligation and responsibility to their community, deepening of their volunteer service, and gratification in their education. The findings of the previous chapter revealed answers to this question, to be presented further in the *Discussion* section of this chapter. Question two arises from the first:

What would such a Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning model look like?

The answer to this question led to the establishment of a curriculum, lesson plans, and other educational frameworks in which to house this model. Since there are virtually no service-learning programs for older adults or research being conducted on this service-learning population, there was nothing to compare it with. Following the theories, practices, and research outlined in the previous chapter, including the addition of Jewish perspectives, this question was *answered* in Chapter IV by formation of the model of the *Project*. This model is explained further in the next section.

According to the direction of the inquiry, the research obtained, and the information analyzed, the short answer to the first research question is that the creation and implementation of the *Project* partially confirms the benefit of such a program for these older adults we studied, for their organizations, and for their communities.

However, to discover what was wholly confirmed and what was partially unsubstantiated, parts of the inquiry need to be dissected and explored individually. These include: 1) the

inclusion of action-oriented tenets of Jewish epistemology (*confirmed*); 2) adding service-learning principles (*partially confirmed*); 3) increased the personal fulfillment (*confirmed*); 4) increased compassion towards others (*partially confirmed*); 5) increased commitment to both service and learning (*partially confirmed*); 6) a volunteer community (*confirmed*); and 7) mature adults (*confirmed*). These full and partial confirmations recount only part of the story. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I will elaborate on these dissected parts and then bring them back together to complete the entire process.

### Summary of the Study Process

For a five month period, eleven volunteer participants combined service, learning, and reflection using a new pathway. These volunteers were regular volunteers at a Jewish non-profit, faith-based and community-based social service organization in a mid-sized southern town. During this time period - November 9, 2011 to March 21, 2012 - participants were involved in seven non-service, educational sessions, titled *gatherings*.

These **academic** *gatherings* consisted of involvement in a type of progressive critical reflective and experiential Jewish bible/text study mixed with exploration of the action-oriented Jewish epistemology, ways of knowing, values, and beliefs framed around and mixed in with service delivery arrangements. The **reflective** portion of the *Project* consisted of contributing to in-depth group discussions, engaging in thought and action-provoking activities, composing personal critically-reflective journals and correspondence using question prompts, and participating in other reflective inquiry systems and approaches. The **service** aspect consisted of providing service at various



Jewish and non-Jewish community and non-profit agencies around the greater metropolitan area, helping to solve community needs. For the *Project*, the participants were responsible for contacting their respective agencies to determine the organizational or community need(s). Although the *Project* spanned a five -month period, it was originally designed to be five weeks (once a week for 5 weeks) in duration. Each *gathering* session lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours, and contained four parts that were repeated each *gathering*.

The first part, part one, of each *gathering* consisted of the participants sharing with the other participants their service experiences at various agencies, especially through the prism of their previous classroom learning sessions. Within this *safe space* they also shared any integration of their service experiences with the educational concepts previously presented during these *gatherings* and with their reflections on these developments. Part two consisted of exploration of different social-action-oriented Jewish values or ways of knowing (such as through enactment of hospitality, gratitude, loving-kindness, compassion, joy, etc.). In order to embody and personify each particular Jewish value, there was an experiential activity performed in pairs (*Hevruta*) and then as a group. This was followed by *Jewish Writings* – a loose cadre of Biblical texts, Jewish prayers, and/or writings of Jewish philosophers, educators, or authors, reinforcing the theme of the session and the activity.

Part three consisted of discussion and reflection of the theme, activity, and text. During this part, the participants discoursed and dialogued, reflected upon, shared, and linked their viewpoints of the text(s), experiential activities, learning, and service. Part

four consisted of a closing and summation in which assignments of reflective exercises beyond *gathering* and *service* times, in the form of *homework* tasks, were given. These assignments were to be reflected upon, journaled, processed, and discussed during non-service and non-class time. These were often brought into the subsequent *gathering* sessions and shared. The participants subsequently returned to their regular service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning and reflection. Then the cycle repeated itself at the next *gathering*.

During these *gatherings*, the qualitative and applied research method of *action research* was adopted. This form of research is one of the preferred methods of studying service-learning because it involves *learning by doing*, which is the service-learning approach. This research technique is a *process* of immediately and concurrently applying the learning of the research to make changes for improving the research study and practice. It consists of a continually repeating cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The information harvested during the process was plowed back into the process. For instance, as part of the *action research* process, it was determined that the initial weekly basis for *gatherings* was too frequent as it did not allow time for absorption and reflection of the information, experiences, and discussions from the sessions and subsequent service. According to the research, the most appropriate frequency of the *gatherings* for this group of older adults was monthly, making the process more meaningful to the participants as they had more time to further reflect on their learning and service prior to the next gathering.

Throughout the process, data were collected, recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Not only was data recorded and collected from participants' discussions at *gatherings*, they were also collected from journal entries, e-mails, follow-up interviews, and other interactions, as well as from feedback of partnering agencies and observations of the researchers. From the data collected and analyzed, results of the *Project* conveyed four themes, including the **VALUE** of 1) pleasure, 2) relationships and connections in community building, 3) multiple perspectives, and 4) compassion in learning, service, and reflection. Although the results of this study cannot be extrapolated to other populations, it is interesting to reflect upon the thoughts expressed in the following discussion when considering future service-learning projects and research, especially related to older adults and to Jewish ways of knowing and values.

### **Discussion**

This *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning Project* illustrates a new way of including both older participants and Jewish ways of knowing into secular and Jewish educational theory and practice, and especially service-learning. However, from the data and its analysis, I think I now understand why many practitioners do not provide service-learning for mature or older adults, and why the prior research shows that mature adults do not benefit as much from service-learning activities as do youth.

### **Problems of Prior and Present Practice and Research**

The non-inclusion and negative viewpoints of including older people in service-learning is perpetuated by the lack of theory, practice and research with this population. In particular, are the issues raised by Rosenberg, Reed, Statham, & Rosing (2012) as

outlined in Chapter II, one of a very few studies that look at service-learning across multiple ages. Their study starts the conversation, for which I am grateful, but it highlights that more research is profoundly needed. These authors conducted a quantitative study of 919 undergraduate college students who participated in service-learning courses at three Midwestern universities during the spring of 2009. Of interest, they reported that *non-traditional* college students “were less enthusiastic about the value of service-learning for the development of their personal skills than others” (p. 157). For these researchers, non-traditional students were those over the age of 26.

In their survey, there were 18 *common* statements using an ordinal scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) that measured skills acquisition, civic engagement, classroom learning, development of “personal skills such as communication and problem solving” (p. 163). In emphasizing the *obtaining* of skills these service-learning programs and research leave out the *utilization* of these skills for personal and community growth. Consequently, I believe this to be a flaw in the way Rosenberg et al., and others, who quantitatively research service-learning, frame their *common* statements or assumptions. First of all, such quantitative measurements force people to self-identify within limited categories and hence do not (deeply) explore the reasons why the participants respond as they do. The Rosenberg, et al. study did not explicitly ask about pleasure, relationships, multiplicity, or compassion. Although their research questions obviously touched on the subject of community, their *common statements* did not explore the relationships created, especially in sub-communities such as the classroom. In particular, their Question # 15, which read, “The other students in this class did not play

an important role in my learning,” could have been their gateway question to understanding why older service-learners appeared less satisfied in service-learning situations. Not only is this statement worded awkwardly, and in the negative, it skirts the importance of relationships.

They also ignored the whole concept of pleasure in learning and service. Not one question was directed towards pleasure. The pleasure of connecting to other people, especially to the Other, is one way of challenging and moving beyond our insensitive disregard for certain parts of the community. We need to interact with not just those within our cultural, racial, class, and religious affiliations but also with those who are on the outside of our shared communities. There were no questions on the Rosenberg et al. study about ethical or moral character building. It is one thing to be asked if “the community work involved in this project made me more aware of my own biases and prejudices” (question # 11) and quite another to *challenge and change* those biases and prejudices. And it is still another level to *act on those changes to stop those biases and prejudices within oneself and within others*. Since there was no opportunity to comment on why one chose a specific range of answers, the deeper meaning was lost. That was one of the purposes of the use of qualitative measures in the *Project* study- to discover deeper meanings. The *Project* research revealed a different set of answers or pathways than the research of Rosenberg et al.

It is not just researchers who have difficulty in envisioning older people in certain educational configurations but also theorists and practitioners as well. The goals of education and of service-learning, I feel, need to be more than just related to skills

acquisition. I think this focus on acquisition and quantification of what is considered a useful *skill* or *knowledge* is indicative of our whole educational system. As a society, we allege that we want to create moral and ethical people but leave these values out of the curriculum, education, discussion, evaluation, and research. We want to be able to *quantify* education and schooling but leave out many of the principles, values, and traits that we claim we wish to instill into our *conduct*, *character*, and *community* that are impossible to measure (such as compassion).

From the *Project*, we see that mature service-learners benefit not by connecting to *skills acquisition* but in developing different and additional connections to information, Other and self. It is not just about connection to the cannon/ text or to the service itself, but connection to the webs of people and ideas created and associated by these connections. This study reminds theorists and practitioners about rhizoactivity (Kang, 2007), as outlined in Chapter II, which is the process of navigating multiplicity of learning in a postmodern world. Western philosophical thought, with its focus on binaries and duality, often denigrates or excludes ideas and peoples with alternative or multiple ways of knowing and doing. During the *Project*, we discovered at least four important rhizoactivity themes for service-learning theory, practice, and research – pleasure, relationships, multiple ways of knowing, and compassionate actions. Pleasure was the overarching theme that emerged from the *Project*.

## **Pleasure**

Based on this research study it appears that older adults have not *enjoyed* service-learning opportunities because these service-learning activities have not been framed

according to their needs and pleasures, explored during these transitional periods. The pleasure in learning, service, and reflection, seemed to revolve around the sensual aspect of embodied knowledge, using all the senses. According to the participants, pleasure in learning comes from learning new information that connects to one's life. The pleasure in service derives from the satisfaction of helping others, performing a job well done, and connecting with another person. The pleasure of reflection develops from new webs of associations forged by connection to a lifetime of experiences and learnings. This cycle perpetuates the pleasures. Pincas (2007) also acknowledges that for older populations play an increasingly important role in society and in education, and that self-fulfillment plays a paramount role in their lives.

“Pleasure” is the tag the researcher used to identify a *feel good* phenomenon often described by the participants. Other terms such as (self) satisfaction, gratification, delight, fulfillment, gladness, happiness, contentment, or joy, might also have been used, since “‘satisfaction’ is not a remaining in the beyond, but a return to oneself, in a univocal and present world” (Levinas, 1978/2001, p. 35). Despite many losses in life, these older people were able to continue to experience pleasure. Perhaps this is part of *tragicomic hope* as explained by West (2004) - the greater the discontentment, the more the need for pleasure and hope. Joy, the basis of the Hasidic movement, emerged at a time of Jewish history when there was deep despair within Eastern European Jewry. Tied in with the connection of joy and hope is the joy and hope of connection to the divine as expounded by Lerner (1994).

Pleasure is an interesting concept, experience, and moral issue. In our society that encourages happiness and pleasure from acquiring, *receiving*, and accumulating THINGS (such as the latest electronic gadget), it is counter-cultural to derive happiness from *giving* to PEOPLE. Judaism requires the giving, which then has the potential for more opportunities of creating the pleasure. Other cultures might not require such giving, especially related to action and social justice. Hence, the opportunity for pleasure from these activities might be reduced in other cultures, especially those in which suffering (K. Armstrong, 2001; Safran, 2003) is the expectation or norm, and pleasures are reserved for the after-life.

### **Suffering**

However, this pleasure principle can work in reverse, causing *suffering* to those who once experienced pleasure with an activity that is no longer attainable. A few of the participants in this *Project* denigrated their present service level – they rated it less valuable than it once was – especially compared to past performance versus present capabilities. For instance, instead of focusing on the value of her moral and ethical character in providing service to others, Sara focused on her diminished *skill* set, noting:

The limitations I find I have on my endurance and ability to do nowadays, the reliance on thoughts rather than physical involvement (actions), the financial limitations to the donations I can make, all fill me with a tremendous kind of guilt that I live with most uncomfortably. Being on the receiving end of “help” rather than the giving end does not sit well on my shoulders, in my head or in my heart. (Sara, 03/28/2012, e-mail evaluation)

Sara is a very passionate and intelligent woman who has much to offer any organization once she is able to focus her service in terms of her amazing mind and strong spirit



instead of her declining body. Of course, this self-devaluation creates suffering instead of the pleasure we seek. As mentioned previously, in this time of transition, the identities of the participants were in flux. Many of the participants had contributed to volunteer activities their entire lives but had never before reflected on these activities. However, I was surprised by how some of these participants viewed their present service negatively compared with their past service. Even though they were providing a service identified by the community that improved the community, they downplayed their impact. The loud chorus of “but I didn’t do enough” at times drowned the soft voice of “feeling good.”

Older people experience many losses throughout their lives. In particular, the physical decline that often accompanies aging is another type of loss to consider when setting up service-learning models for older adults. Comparisons from self-identified past service *ability* to perceived present service *disability* is a type of feedback loop with potential negative consequences on these older adult service-learners, their identities, and their communities. That is why I feel that the critical reflection process of service-learning modalities has the potential to address and transform the self-identity for these participants that had previously been intimately entwined with service through the physical. If pleasurable feelings of service can be identified and transferred from the physical to the non-physical realms of service (the intellectual, social, emotional, ethical, and spiritual), then older people can be involved with service-learning projects for longer durations, and with greater pleasure. The ability to find pleasure and joy despite initial suffering from lessened or alternative activities is a different type of skill set often

unrecognized or undeveloped that is extremely important to the maintenance of the older person's individual and group identity. As Slattery (2006) describes in his postmodern theological proposal:

Diversity, eclecticism, and ecumenism bring us together to wisdom and justice. One must give everything away to become rich, let go in order to live, experience suffering in order to understand joy. (p. 103)

Through their new ways of knowing through pleasure, compassion, relationships, and connections, these participants can continue to challenge their perceptions, and the societal focus, of service as physical ability, opening a space for the value of service in terms of less physical expressions.

Group dynamics within this *Project's* service-learning milieu were helpful in this process, especially related to the experience of open, accepting, non-judgmental, and caring interactions during the *Project*. Numerous times, the participants pointed out to those who denigrated their perceived present level of service that their service was indeed valued. This related back to their embodiment of Jewish action-oriented social justice activities, which can also be pleasurable in nature. For instance, even *struggling* can have a cathartic release, causing the *feel good* factor. Compared with teens who demonstrate a certain amount of hyped up bravado, mature people have the benefit of a lifetime of experiences to lessen egocentric tendencies, to understand the needs of a community and to realize what they can and cannot offer to the community. When they can offer service, perhaps recognizing this lesser physical but greater mental or spiritual plane, older adults

might be filled again by the rush of *good feelings* which remain a motivating force to continue with service and service-learning activities.

Related to this issue of pleasure and suffering are the issues of time, place, and space. Time is an important consideration, as most of the participants expressed their desire to not want to waste their time. I believe that this is why the few studies that were done with older service-learning adults showed that they did not *gain* as much from the experience as with younger or traditional high school or early college service-learners. They did the *required* service but it wasn't framed around their needs. These older participants state not only that they want to feel good about their activity but they view their time as a more valuable resource than during youth. There is a strong emotional conflict between providing service that is needed in the community but does not interest the service-learner and the needs of the service-learner in terms of personal time, space, and satisfaction, returning to the importance of relationships.

### **Relationships, Communities, and Community Need**

Relationships and connections were common themes of the study, emphasizing the importance of community building. These *gatherings* sessions became the *Project's first community* that was built and expanded from there. Relationships were also important with the partnering agencies and these relationships formed another type of community. The community *need* was another type of relationship. For this *Project*, applying the widest and most encompassing definitions of service-learning, all the participants except one fulfilled a community need, and this was confirmed through the survey, the curricular assessment (see Appendices C and E), and follow-up contact with

partnering agencies. However, at times, the classroom sessions and learning did play a greater role than the service. Yet, in the end, this *Project* ultimately did accomplish the requirement of fulfilling a community need for the *participants* by determining their “learning” needs and those of future older adult service-learners within this type of project structure. In addition, the participants shared their experiences and their findings with the Board Members of *The Agency*. In this regard, the participants showed these Board Members the *need* of such service-learning initiatives for older, more mature, adults in their community and how that *need* can be filled and fulfilled through *The Agency*.

### **Moral Considerations and Communities.**

If there had been a criterion for acceptance into the *Project* based on intellectual and physical capacities such as understanding, memory, independence, and ability to follow-through, one of the participants would not have been permitted into the *Project*. However, this participant desperately wanted to be part of the study and group experience. Should she NOT have been included in the *Project* since her ability to provide service and to participate in critical reflection were limited, both physically and intellectually? As part of the compassionate, just, and hospitable Jewish values and ways of knowing that we were studying and implementing, we could not discard, reject, or leave her out of the process. That would be an immoral act. Therefore, from a philosophical, moral, ethical, and Jewish viewpoint, we included her in the *Project*.

This also connected the moral consideration of collaboration rather than competition as a planned part of the *Project*. As Tate (2004) revealed, andragogical

research shows adults learn most effectively when engaged collaboratively with peers (p. xxv). This collaboration worked very well in the *Hevruta* pairings and experiential exercises. We found that this collaborative process was extremely helpful in reinforcing the learning and shifting the paradigms of the participants.

### **Multiple Viewpoints**

Since it was expected that some of the participants might be resistant to change at this time in their lives, it was inspiring to see how quickly the critical reflective portion of the *Project* became part of these *mature* adults' psyches. Of note, the participants did not need to read massive amounts of books and articles to understand the concepts, make these shifts, or embrace multiple viewpoints. Presenting the ideas, participating in embodied activities, discussing viewpoints, and sharing or challenging reflections were enough for change to manifest. This is keeping with Fields (2012) who observed that "subjects in their 60s were better than younger ones at imagining different points of view, thinking of multiple resolutions, and suggesting compromise" (p. 12). These interesting cognitive benefits of growing old counter the negative stereotypes and expectation of society as well as these older individuals toward mental decline. The participants often exclaimed their surprise at enduring and new cognitive functions.

### **Multiple Perspectives of Service-Learning, Organizations and Agencies.**

In designing new plans, programs, or partnerships, with and between non-profit organizations and/or faith-based agencies, care needs to be taken in maintaining open communication. The other non-profit community agencies and organizations with which we partnered were and are very open to the idea of community and educational

partnerships in service-learning beyond *traditional* educational institutions. These structures, within and between non-traditional educational establishments, created interesting alignments. As one non-profit organization to another, we understood the community needs and limited resources, shared many of the same values, and were generally on level power dynamics. Similar to Noblit (1993) and the ethical use of power through caring in the teacher-student dynamic, this organization-to organization service-learner relationship utilized the ethical use of power and caring.

In keeping with the idea of the multiple ways of knowing of this *Project*, the vague, and sometimes contradictory, definitions of service-learning, especially related to *community need*, were not to be viewed as problems at all. They were opportunities to welcome new populations, modalities, service, ways of reflection, and ways of knowing into service-learning communities. As the service-learning industry continues to struggle with their definitions, it expands itself into greater inclusionary spaces for its members.

However, in the enthusiasm for the idea of engaging older volunteers in new avenues, caution needs to be maintained regarding the logistics of the *Project*, especially around the issue of utilization of staff and facility resources. For instance, most Jewish social service agencies survive on limited budgets and part-time employment options. In my research, that is one of the main reasons that there has not been an implementation of older adult service-learning practices within the Jewish community, and this was stated explicitly in my conversations and research with other Jewish organizations. The educational transformation of social service agencies is a low priority.

Yet, as *The Agency* became more of an educational institution, the participants became more engaged students. As often happens in academia, some of the participants spent much time researching the concepts and topics presented during the classroom sessions. Some of the participants spent much time delving into the theoretical and practical concepts presented during the *gatherings*, that as a by-product of this learning, they significantly improved service delivery to their partnering institution. In terms of taking charge of identifying and enacting ways to assist with fulfilling the community needs of their agency, this was noted during follow-up interviews with the partnering organizations. One supervisor remarked that her *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learner* demonstrated much personal growth, “and has taken initiative that I never before observed” (Gina, partnering agency follow-up, 03/15/2012).

### **Compassion**

There are multiple ways of viewing compassion, which bring into question factors such as heredity, environment, gender, power, modeling, education, and action. According to Greene (1991) compassion is not just an attending to the multiple voices of being with a multiplicity of needs, but, more importantly, there is a *language* of compassion for which we must constantly search. She states that “compassion signifies a feeling *with* as another human being concerned to sustain the fulfillment of the other” (p. 550), and that we have to:

keep searching for a language of compassion, if only to enable persons to speak with us and with one another about the dissonances they feel, the gaps, the voids, the consciousness of what is not yet – and what might be, what ought to be. (Greene, 1991, p. 553)

What is not yet is the mainstream idea of involving older adults in service-learning activities. What might be is the compassion that these mature people bring to the service-learning community. They bring a multiplicity of compassion.

The multiple ways of looking at compassion made it difficult to determine a definition or measurement of compassion. In framing the research question as *increasing compassion*, a multiplicity of answers materialized. However, at the beginning of this *Project* process I searched for a way to measure compassion. After a search that could have been its own dissertation project, I discovered a quasi-answer from Emiliana Simon-Thomas, Ph.D., Associate Director, Senior Scientist, Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, Stanford Institute for Neuro-Innovation and Translational Neuroscience, School of Medicine, Stanford University via [www.ccare.stanford.edu](http://www.ccare.stanford.edu). In an e-mail reply to my query about instruments for measuring compassion, she commented that there is “actually not a great, consensus measure of compassion at this time” (E. Simon-Thomas, personal e-mail correspondence, 10/04/2011). Although she mentioned several scales that try to measure compassion, she also commented that:

there is not currently a survey out there that assesses the magnitude of an individual’s compassion in response to perceived suffering, or an individual’s disposition towards/tendency to experience compassion (E. Simon-Thomas, personal e-mail correspondence, 10/04/2011).

Nevertheless, she explained that this is precisely what the researchers at the Center are presently working on (see Appendix F for the entire e-mail).



Since it was impossible to quantify the notion of compassion, it also fell into the nebulous *multiple* categories related to ways of knowing that have characterized this *Project*. This language of compassion emanates from many pathways and vistas, including from the Jewish viewpoint. In Chapter III, *Rahmanut*, the Hebrew word for compassion, was presented by a full *Talmud-type* page devoted to it. The questions and the answers related to compassion were left to vagueness, not to a Likert or other psychometric scale. Although there is no agreed upon definition of compassion, the Jewish concept of compassion as not just a feeling but an action - another Jewish way of knowing and doing. The actions these older adult service-learning participants demonstrated, contributed to an “ethic of care” (Smith, 2008, page 10) as a consequence of being part of this *Project*.

### **Conclusions**

The findings of the study expanded the work of previous researchers in the area of service-learning and included an older population than is normally not involved in the practice and research of service-learning. It also welcomed Jewish epistemology, value, and beliefs related to social justice. While this *Project* was a unique work, focusing on different populations, epistemologies and values, and settings for service-learning, it followed established, accepted, and grounded processes, theories, practices, and research. Although the results of this *Project* cannot be extrapolated to populations beyond that which participated in the study, it raises issues that can be researched beyond this group.

Within the *Project* the researcher and participants inadvertently exposed, explored and countered negative attitudes about these older people and their learning, not just

within their general communities but also within themselves, including their perceptions related to their hither-to-fore perceived inability to learn. Since there was so little research that describes what older people themselves say they want and need to learn (Boulton-Lewis, 2010) through service-learning milieus, these participants were invited as researchers and reported the how, why, where of their learning. This *Project* assisted these older service-learners with new identity formation and roles in society. Confirmed within the study is that these older adult service-learners' have different needs and experiences than that of younger participants. The tangible acquisition of skills and character development of youth was replaced with the intangible acquisition of personal satisfaction and hope. The focus of these older adult service-learning participants converted into pleasure, self-satisfaction in connecting broadening viewpoints, giving back and providing service at a less physical but more spiritual level, and transforming the self into a continuing productive and compassionate vessel within society. Therefore, I believe this service-learning configuration is a viable option for older adults. As such, it is important that the facilitator of such projects be focused on liberatory practices, assisting in the process of co-learners' self-direction in learning. Within these frameworks, I believe, are the key for mobilizing older people to remain vibrant and active members of our societies.

Since identity is tied to multiple sociocultural, economic, political, and spiritual factors, it was interesting to see which factors were the most prominent in causing these participants to *feel good* or experience pleasure. These older volunteers have experienced many losses in their lives, especially the death of loved ones and friends, as well as

moving from familiar to unfamiliar surroundings to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Therefore they appear to be seeking new ways to make new connections. I believe that these *gatherings* were able to fulfill that need. New friendships were forged and the participants genuinely looked forward to seeing each other.

At the beginning of the *Project*, some of the participants were uncomfortable with conflict or ambiguity; by the end of the *Project* they stated enjoyment at the idea of simultaneous, multiple, and often conflicting ways of knowing. Just as Jacob from the Bible emerged from his wrestling with a new name, a new identity, and a new confidence, the participants did the same!

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

This study provides several implications for practice and policy for secular and Jewish service-learning paradigms for *mature* adults and those who interact with such older adults. Many faith traditions have some forms of present tense or earthly plane social-action or social-justice oriented epistemology, values, beliefs, and deeds. Even the secular tradition has humanism and other belief systems that help frame it in terms of *doing good in the world*. This might be a starting point for hooking in older secular and Jewish adults into service-learning practices and, especially, the critical reflection that is the hallmark of this movement.

By weaving the reflection through the social setting of discussions rather than the individualistic location of journal writing, additional meanings and webs of association arose from these reflective practices. I believe that secular and Jewish service-learning *reflection through discussion* process will be more appealing to older adults and their

needs to connect with each other and to share their knowledges. Because of this phenomenon, I can even envision inter-religious dialogues through this framework. As bell hooks (1994) adds:

to engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences. (p. 130)

This *Project* served just one segment of an underrepresented but potentially increasing population of service-learners. It showed that service-learning configurations using older adult populations, in non-traditional community agencies, beyond *skills* development are possible. Acknowledging that our society does not sufficiently engage older adults in educational, reflective, and service activities, I entreat these educational and service industries to now consider older adults in their practices and research. I agree with Elcott and Himmelfarb (2012), who stated that we need to engage older adults in service-learning activities. As we include increasing numbers of older and mature adults in more of these activities, we have a better chance to continue to study and learn from our inquiry, which might benefit learners and service-learners of all ages. It would be interesting for future studies to include even more diverse groups of older people, such as interfaith groups and intergenerational groups.

Slattery (2006) goes further when he explains that curriculum development in the postmodern era must aggressively and consistently include lessons and experiences that will ameliorate the divisions and hatred we face in the world today (p. 144). Since there are few studies of adult participation in service-learning, much remains to be learned

about how and if service-learning can promote adult development. In essence, this adult service-learning curriculum is about emancipation in every sense of the word. It is emancipation from traditional thought processes, emancipation from traditional work and service categories, emancipation from the language of oppression and negative self-talk, emancipation from set roles and rules, emancipation from competitive classroom settings, and emancipation from time and space itself. Giroux (1980) explains that:

transcendence as a category of the dialectic is a call to action informed by emancipatory vision. It is a call to develop an awareness of our own historically conditioned self-formative processes as well as an awareness of the socially unnecessary modes of domination that shaped the larger society. (p. 16)

Policy makers must recognize that there is presently little societal support for older adult service-learners, and work to change this. Therefore, policy makers need to develop financial incentives - grants and scholarships - for research, programming, and attendance. However, financial issues are not the only necessities. For older adults who want to access *traditional* educational intuitions such as colleges and universities for their service-learning opportunities, there are issues with technology, especially computer-illiteracy, transportation, and physicality in service-learning paradigms. That is why funding for alternatives to higher education settings for older adult service-learners is vital. These non-traditional educational sites, many of them non-profit organizations, might also be more cost effective than universities. Most importantly, administrators and strategists need to invite older people to sit on policy directed boards and committees related to educational, service, learning, service-learning, non-profit, and community realms. Practitioners and researchers need to create spaces for older people to access their

answers to the what, how, and where questions, to hear what older people need, and use these answers to direct policy, programming and research.

### **Recommendations**

In this *Project*, there was a co-mingling of adult education, lifelong learning, and service-learning theories, practices, and research from both the secular and Jewish perspectives. This interweaving makes it difficult to address recommendations to both secular and Jewish groups since their needs might be different. Therefore, for this recommendations section, the recommendations will be separated. Beginning with the Jewish community, where the *Project* started and where it is most apt to be perpetuated, these recommendations challenge many present practices.

#### **Recommendations within the Jewish Community**

The purpose of my study was to show that Jewish service-learning can hold a particular potential for older people when they are in a critical transition from mid/late career to third-age or retirement phase. As noted in the previous chapters, the recommendation for inclusion of older people in Jewish service-learning opportunities (Irie and Blair, 2008; Elcott & Himmelfarb, 2012) is not new. Throughout this process, other Jewish service-learning organizations, Jewish Family Services, Jewish community centers, Jewish Federations, were contacted to determine present endeavors in Jewish service-learning for older adults.

This idea for a *Jewishly-informed mature adult service-learning Project* began in 2007 before ever reading the Irie & Blair (2008) report; research shows that almost six years later, there are very few programs providing any arrangement of Jewish service-

learning to older adults. I hope this research encourages these organizations to finally consider adding an *older* component.

I would like to see the Jewish community embrace older / mature adult service-learning. It is a delightful way to keep older adults, especially Baby Boomers, engaged in *giving back* to the community (Kirk & Riedle, 2005) while increasing their lifetime knowledge and understanding Judaism and its tenets. Although there is much written on the topic of Baby Boomers and service (Harvard School of Public Health & MetLife Foundation, 2004; Bridgeland, Putnam & Wofford, 2008; Foster-Bey and Dietz, 2007) and even Jewish Baby Boomers and service (Elcott, 2010; Elcott & Himmelfarb, 2012; Waxman, 2001; AJFCA, 2008), the truth is that compared with youth, very little in the way of recruitment, programming, or research in service-learning for older people is occurring. I recommend that not only should there be more opportunities to engage older people in Jewish service-learning opportunities but that these opportunities explicitly state in recruitment and programming the importance of pleasure, multiple ways of knowing, relationships and connections, and compassion. There should also be more research on pleasure, multiple ways of knowing, relationships and connections, and compassion with these and other service-learner groups.

I also recommend funding for research on older Jewish adult service-learning, as well as funding for Jewish mature adults to access service-learning configurations in their communities. I recommend that the Jewish community find ways to utilize the creative energies and minds of older people. The value and use of non-traditional educational structures and settings in secular and Jewish service-learning programs are also

recommended. With the emergence of the field of adult Jewish learning, there needs to be research regarding the lack of systematic data collection about programs, funding structures, or long-term impacts for Jewish adult education and especially adult Jewish service-learning.

These concepts have much to offer, not just for Jews and the Jewish community. I recommend making service-learning more multiethnic and global. There is no one formula for making this happen but we need to create the conditions for its growth. I agree with Schuster and Grant's (2005) recommendations and expand on them by adding that future research should include (1) the purposes of adult Jewish service-learning, (2) adult Jewish service-learning settings, subject matter, and methods of instruction, and (3) underrepresented groups in adult Jewish service-learning programs. Otherwise, these mature adult Jewish service-learners will take their talents, and their money, elsewhere.

### **Recommendations within the Secular and Non-Jewish Communities**

The secular community is already providing adult service-learning on a limited scale, usually as a service-learning course taught at a college or university. However, research (Rosenberg et al., 2012) shows that these older adults value the experience less than younger participants. That might be related to the way the service-learning course is set up. Perhaps a service-learning course that is expressly tailored for older participants that focuses on pleasure, relationships, multiple viewpoints, and compassion might be a consideration. Since the percentage of people older than 50 who attend college is very low - 2.47 % average over the last 5 years at UNCG (Office of the Registrar, Personal communication, January 7, 2013) - it might be a better course to set these older adult



service-learning arrangements up in non-traditional educational settings such as the one for the study – in a non-profit social service agency. On the one hand, I would love to see more mature people attend service-learning courses at institutions of higher education (interestingly the oldest person taking a service-learning course at UNCG was age 76), but on the other hand most older people do not access these establishments.

I also content that older adult Jewish service-learning experiences differ from secular service-learning experiences. These Jewishly informed practices allow for a moral and spiritual component that many older people are seeking. Based on the research, I recommend the inclusion of Jewish values and ways of knowing in service-learning theory and practice, inclusion and practice of Jewish social-justice action-oriented activities into learning and service-learning possibilities. I challenge other non-Jewish religious and spiritual institutions to involve older adults in progressive service-learning opportunities, within these Jewish action-oriented paradigms or with their own religious traditions. By affirming the moral and spiritual values that our brothers and sisters of other faiths embrace and hold dear, our communities can become further connected and strengthened. I especially would like to see interfaith service-learning projects for older adults as well as service-learning projects for intergenerational groups, since “there is no universal Bible and no universal master narrative to interpret the various translations” (Slattery, 2006, p. 102).

Similar to the recommendations for older adult Jewish service-learners, it is recommended that not only should there be more opportunities for older people to engage in service-learning pathways but that these opportunities explicitly state in recruitment

and programming the pleasure, multiple ways of knowing, relationships and connections, and compassion in such endeavors. I recommend additional research and funding on these topics, on service-learning for older adults, and on access to non-traditional educational structures. In this chapter, I placed the results on a moral and ethical pathway that, combine, and, I feel, balance, individual needs and community needs. I feel it is now time to drive down these pathways. This path was illuminated as the research progressed and rekindled my (com)passion.

### **The Journey will Continue**

Our trip together has taken us through many pathways, some of them new. People are often unconsciously directed toward road structures built in hierarchies, in power dynamics, and in dualities - becoming stuck in deep tire tracks that dominant forces continue to hew. There are official maps of our community but there are also many alternative routes and hidden roads that Others *know* and use to get around. Sharing these roadmaps and roadways with each other is a first step in. By using rhizoactivity (Kang, 2007) to navigate the multiplicity of adult education, lifelong learning, service-learning, and Jewish social-action values in a postmodern world, a distinctive beauty, purpose, and value of all parts begin to surface. Since there are many reasons why people do not know about all these roads, we began this journey by looking at education, how people learn, and the way we know learning across and between disciplines. As Mirochnik (2002) points out, “learning is both how people learn and what they learn” (p. 199). This push for a more holistic and pluralistic knowledge creation and perspective of adult service-learning includes personal and social transformations.

The *Project* combined many ideas to engage co-researchers in approaches to complex problems revolving around critical questioning and contemporary society. There were persuasive texts and ideas, connecting the practical and philosophical into a moral and spiritual vision. These points to ways of living a good and sacred life. It continues Jewish learning for Jewish people and introduces its values and beliefs to new learner populations. Like a road, the use of this *Project* can be widened.

Bringing all the pieces together, the inclusion of action-oriented tenets of Jewish values and ways of knowing, coupled with service-learning principles, does indeed increase the personal fulfillment, compassion towards others, and commitment to both service and learning of a volunteer community of these mature adults. It does so by utilizing flexible recurring frames of sharing service and educational experiences, partaking of experiential activities, contributing to discussions and open dialogue, reflecting on these happenings, providing service that helps our communities, and forging new connections and relationships to people and ideas. The time to include older adults and Jewish ways of knowing into the service-learning community is now. For as Rabbi Hillel reminds us:

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר אִם אֵין אֲנִי לִי. מִי לִי. וְכִשְׁאַנִּי  
לְעַצְמִי. מָה אֲנִי. וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו. אֵימָתָי:

He [Hillel] says, “If I am not for myself, who is for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” (Pirkei Avot 1:14)

Now that is a roadmap to follow!

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## GLOSSARY

**Action Research.** A qualitative and applied research technique that uses recurring cycles of planning, action, observation and evaluation to constantly improving practice and study as it is happening.

**Adult Education.** Education for adults after they are no longer in educational settings such as school or university, it is a process of continued learning after formal schooling in which coordinated activities accomplish specific educational objectives.

**Adonai.** Hebrew word for *My Lord* - used as a substitute for writing or pronouncing the forbidden Y-H-V-H Tetragrammaton.

**Aggadah.** Hebrew word for *narrative* or *tale*, usually of rabbinic origin.

**Aliyah, Aliyot.** Hebrew word for *going up*. Aliyah has two meanings. It refers to the honor of being called up to the Torah to recite the blessing at a public communal service, and also refers the act of immigrating Israel.

**Andragogy.** The art and science of helping adults learn, it is the theories, methods, and techniques for facilitating adult learning.

**Avodah.** Hebrew word for *work*, it has come to mean *service*, such as service-work to humanity or to God.

**B'tzelem Elohim.** Hebrew phrase for *in the image of God*.

**Bar or Bat Mitzvah.** Hebrew phrase for *son of commandments* or *daughter of commandments*. The ritual or age of the achievement of reaching religious maturity, usually at age twelve or thirteen.

**Beliefs.** The way we *think* the world is (not the way it should be).

**B'dihut.** Hebrew word for *humor*.

**Binary opposition.** A conflict between two opposite poles, without consideration of gradations (such as big/small, liberal/conservative).

**Brit.** Hebrew word for *Covenant*, it often refers to circumcision of 8 day-old boys into the covenant of Abraham.

**Bubbulah.** Yiddish term of endearment, usually for a child or young person, it literally means *small doll*.



**Concept.** An organizing idea or mental construct in one or two words that categorizes a variety of examples. Concepts are timeless, universal, abstract and broad.

**Corporeal.** Having, consisting of, or relating to a physical or material body. Fleishy, not spiritual.

**Covenant.** In Hebrew – *Brit*. An ongoing relationship between God and the Jewish people, a sort of marriage, shaped by Jewish law or religious obligations/ service, prayer, and other spiritual actions such as *tikkun olam*. Also see *Brit*.

**Critical Reflection.** Evaluating and challenging the assumptions upon which our beliefs and values have been assembled that shape our thought and actions, and that have limited the meanings and perspectives of ourselves, our institutions, our communities, and our world. By exploring these viewpoints through critical reflection, we can make changes to ourselves that might have significant positive impact on all aspects of life and interactions.

**Critical Thinking.** The intellectual and methodical process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

**Critical Theory.** Contains elements of neo-Marxism, postcolonial, feminist, and queer theory to show that white European science and philosophy are historical cultural constructions that dominant theories and practices over that of others. It seeks to change social and cultural contexts.

**Curriculum.** The courses offered by educational institutions that make up a specific knowledge base. As Slattery (2006) notes, “the art and science of interpretation is the central enterprise of school curriculum” (p. 116).

**Davar, devarim.** Hebrew word for *words*, it also means *things*.

**Dialectic.** Reasoning using dialogue as a method of intellectual investigation, it is the nature of logical argumentation or the juxtaposition/ interaction of conflicting ideas and perceptions.

**Derekh Eretz.** Hebrew phrase that translates as *the way of the earth*, it has come to refer to *manners* or the *way to treat others*.

**Dichotomy.** Dividing things into two mutually exclusive or contradictory entities.

**Dibrot.** Hebrew word for *responsibilities*.

**Discursive:** Moving from subject to subject or covering a wide range of topics, it is a form of *rambling*.

**Duality.** Having a dual nature. The theory of reducing the reality into two further irreducible opposing approaches –one is usually considered good and the other is not. Also see binary opposition, Cartesian Dualism.

**Education.** The concept and process of acquiring general knowledge via the theory and practice of teaching.

**Epistemology.** The way of knowing. A branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge, by asking the question “How do we know what we know?”

**Ethics.** The study of the moral value systems of right and wrong on human conduct and its consequences, it answers the question, “What is the ‘good’ way to act?”

**Extrinsic.** Originating from or on the outside. External or foreign.

**Feminist theory.** A theory focused on inequality in power, politics, and denigration of women’s viewpoints, voices, and life experiences, it is also related to postcolonialism, postmodernism, and post-Freudian psychoanalysis.

**Galut.** Hebrew word for *exile*, it has come to imply three meanings - living outside of the land of Israel, a condition of oppression or persecution, and countries outside of Israel. The Diaspora.

**Gemilut Hasadim.** Hebrew phrase for *the giving of loving-kindness*. Also see *hesed*.

**Hagaddah.** Hebrew phrase for *the telling*, it refers to a book used at the Passover *Seder* to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt as mentioned in the bible.

**Hakarat HaTov.** Hebrew phrase for *recognizing the good*, it has come to mean “being grateful.” Also see *todah* and *todot*.

**Halakhah.** The Hebrew word for *walking, path* or *to go*, it has come to mean *Jewish law*, both the written and oral traditions – and the *way* a person should walk or *go through life*. The Way.

**Hallah, challah.** A special egg bread, usually braided, that is served on Shabbat and festivals.

**Hahnasat Orhim.** Hebrew phrase for *welcoming guests*, it has come to mean the concept of *hospitality*.

**Hashem.** Hebrew for phrase literally translated as *The Name*, it is used as a substitute for writing or pronouncing the forbidden Y-H-V-H Tetragrammaton. See Adonai and Elohim).

**Hasidism.** Jewish religious and spiritual movement founded in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in Poland by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (literally *master of the good name*), it is from the Hebrew word *hesed* meaning *loving-kindness* or *piety*. Hasid & Hasadim are followers of Hasidism.

**Havdallah.** Hebrew word for *separation*, it is the ceremony which concludes the Sabbath and separates it from the weekday.

**Havurah.** Hebrew word for *fellowship*, *group*, *society*, *company*, or *friendship*, it is also the popular contemporary American Jewish movement that forms small and informal groups for study, prayer, and holiday celebrations.

**Heder.** Hebrew word for *room*, implying *classroom*, it was a term used in the past for Jewish religious education, mostly for boys. In modern times, the term would be Hebrew School, Sunday School, or Religious School, and would include girls.

**Hegemony.** The domination and supremacy over others, it can manifest as a social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence or authority wielded by a dominant group or nation.

**Hesed.** Literally the Hebrew word for *loyalty* to God and human, it has come to mean *lovingkindness*. It has also been translated as *grace* and as *love*.

**Hermeneutics.** The Greek word for *interpreter*, it has come to mean the study of the theory and practice of interpretation.

**Hermeneutic Circle.** The theory of interpretation and awareness that one cannot understand the whole, or parts of that whole, without concurrently changing each, it is a continually changing worldview shaped by one's education, experiences, tenets and beliefs.

**Herut.** Hebrew word for *liberation*.

**Heuristic.** The search for a higher level of understanding.

**Hevruta.** From the Hebrew word for *friendship*, it has come to mean a Jewish interpretive social learning practice or hermeneutical conversation. Many people think of it as the Yeshiva style of two people learning together by interpreting and challenging the text and each other.

**Hitpal'ut.** Hebrew word for *wonder* or *surprise*, it has also been used to describe *awe*.

**Hofesh**. Hebrew word for *freedom* or *holiday*.

**Hokhma**. Hebrew word for *wisdom*.

**Identity politics**. The political activity or movements based on the cultural, ethnic, religious, racial, gender, or social interests within a group identity.

**Ineffable**. Another name for God, this word means *indescribable*, which God is.

**Intrinsic**. Belonging to the essential nature or constitution of a thing, it refers to that which is inborn, innate, integral, inherent, native, or natural.

**Jewish Service-Learning**. Combines direct service that responds to real community needs with structured learning and time for reflection, placed in a rich context of Jewish education and values.

**Juxtaposition**: Placing side by side, especially for comparison or contrast.

**Kabbalah**. General term for Jewish mysticism, usually from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

**Kashrut**. Jewish dietary laws. Kosher.

**Kavod**. Hebrew word for *honor*.

**K'hilah, Kehilla**. Hebrew word for *community*, in the Diaspora it has come to mean a local Jewish community that provides for the needs of its members.

**Kiddush**. The traditional blessing and prayer recited over wine on Shabbat or festivals.

**Kvell**. Yiddish word for a person who is extremely proud of someone else's accomplishments.

**Learning**. The attainment of knowledge through experience, practice, study, or being taught.

**Liberate/ liberatory**. Setting a group or person free from bondage or imprisonment, physically, intellectually, economically, socially, culturally, or emotionally.

**Lifelong learning**. The development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments. (Longworth & Davies, 1996, p. 22)

**Menuha**. Hebrew word for *rest*, it is usually associated with Sabbath rest and reflection.

**Menorah.** Candelabrum - the seven branched one used in the Tabernacle and Temple or the eight-branched one used at *Hanukkah*.

**Mensch.** Yiddish word meaning *man*, it has come to mean a *decent human being* or *good person*.

**Mezuzah.** Hebrew word for *doorpost*, it is placed on the doorposts of Jewish homes, and contains a parchment with Biblical verses on it (see Shema).

**Midrash.** From the Hebrew word *darash*, which means *explore, inquire, or ask*, it is a type of rabbinic literature that often presents with elaborate or whimsical interpretations of Bible texts.

**Minhag/Mesoret.** Hebrew words for *custom* or *tradition*.

**Minyan.** The quorum of ten people, traditionally ten men, over the age of twelve or thirteen, required for communal worship.

**Mishnah.** The second century rabbinic legal code that forms the basis of the *Talmud*, it is divided into six parts, or orders, which are organized by topic into sixty-three short books, known as tractates.

**Mishpat.** Hebrew word for *legal precedent*, it has come to mean *rules* or *justice*. The plural is *Mishpatim* which has come to mean *rules* or *obligations*.

**Mitzvah.** Hebrew word for *commandment* from God, it is also commonly used to denote a *good deed*. There are 613 commandments in the Torah; the best known are the *Ten Commandments*.

**Moda'ut.** Hebrew word for *mindfulness*.

**Moral.** Principles, guides, and ideas that focus on the ways in which human beings relate to other human beings and to the world, usually in terms of good versus bad behavior or character.

**Mutually Exclusive.** Events or concepts that cannot be simultaneously true.

**Ontology.** The study of the nature of existence or being, it asks the question, "What is the nature of being?"

**Oseh Hesed.** Hebrew word for the obligation of *doing loving-kindness*.

**Oxymoron.** A combination of contradictory or incongruous words (such as jumbo shrimp), or a concept that is made up of incompatible elements.

**Paradigm.** A model or pattern, it is a worldview of the theories and practices of a particular subject or group.

**Pedagogy.** The art, science, or profession of teaching and learning. Education. Instructional methods, techniques, functions, or activities pertaining to a teacher or educator.

**Pesach.** The Jewish holiday of *Passover*.

**Phenomenology.** The study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view.

**Philosophy.** Literally the Greek word for *lover of wisdom*, it is what people do when they try to understand central truths about themselves, and the relationship of these truths to the world, and to each other. It is asking and answering life's most basic questions. If "philosophy is a form of hospitality – inviting in the unknown" (Hudak, personal communication, 2010), then the host (philosophy) beckons us into the discussion.

**Positivism, positivist, positivistic.** The belief that through "objective" scientific inquiry, only ONE authentic and therefore "true" knowledge or answer that can be verified and proven.

**Post-Formal Thinking.** An emancipatory system of meaning grounded in feminist theory, African American epistemologies, critical theory, and postmodernism which challenges and revises cognitive theory construction, and the system of purpose and meaning, through human dignity, freedom, authority, and social responsibility. (Kincheloe and Steinberg)

**Pirkei Avot.** Usually translated from Hebrew as *Ethics of our Fathers*, it is the best-known book of the *Mishnah*, containing favorite maxims and teachings of many generations of different rabbis. I translate it as *Ethics of our Ancestors*, even though the teachings are exclusively by men, and have also heard it translated as *Ethics of our Sages*.

**Pragmatism.** A practical, matter-of-fact way of approaching problem-solving, it is philosophy that measures ideas, truths or meaning by its observable practical or pragmatic consequences. William James and John Dewey were pragmatists.

**Praxis.** The dynamic interaction of action and reflection, it is the practical application of a concept or theory.

**Principles.** A generalized tenet that holds consistently over time, it is an accepted or acknowledged rule of action or behavior.

**Process.** The undertaking of a series of (systematic) actions or steps linked together to accomplish a specific goal.

**Rabbi.** Hebrew word for *My Teacher*, it was first used in the first century CE to describe someone who is committed to living and teaching the Jewish tradition. In contemporary times, it refers to Jewish ordination or clergy.

**Rahamim / Rahmanut.** Hebrew word for *compassion* or *compassionate*.

**Recursive.** Utilizing a procedure that can repeat itself indefinitely.

**Refu'ah.** Hebrew word for *healing*.

**Rhizoactivity.** Navigating multiplicity of education and learning in a postmodern world.

**Rosh Hashanah.** The beginning of the Jewish year, it is one of the High Holidays (HolyDays) that occur in the fall.

**Schooling.** The institution, or place, in which education or instruction is given.

**Service-learning.** The combining of learning and service, via experiential and community-based projects which fulfill community needs, and critical reflection mediated through academic coursework, readings, exercises, and discussions.

**Servant Leadership.** A phrase first coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, it is a movement/ philosophy in which leadership flows from service to the community and not vice versa.

**Shabbat.** The Hebrew word for *Sabbath*, it is a day of rest on the seventh day of the week (in Judaism from Friday night to Saturday night).

**Shamot.** Hebrew word for *naming* or *labeling*.

**She'elah Bekortit.** Hebrew phrase for *critical questioning*.

**Shekhinah.** Hebrew word for *indwelling*, it is the divine presence in the world. In Kabbalah, the *Shekhinah* is the feminine aspect of God.

**Shema.** Hebrew word for *hear* or *listen*, it refers to the Biblical verse beginning with the word *Shema* found in Deuteronomy 6:4.

**Shinui.** Hebrew word for *transformation*.

**Shoah.** Hebrew word for *catastrophe*, it is also called the *Holocaust* because of the catastrophic destruction of European Jewry during World War II by the Nazis.

- Shofar.** The ram's horn generally blown during the Jewish High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- Siddur.** Hebrew word for *order*, it refers to the Sabbath and daily Jewish prayer book that follow a certain order and structure.
- Sim<sup>h</sup>a.** Hebrew word for *joy*.
- Skills.** Nested within processes, skills are particular abilities learned in order to carry out broader and more complex concepts and actions.
- Tallit.** Jewish prayer shawl.
- Talmud.** From the Hebrew root for *study*, this is the central text of rabbinic Judaism that was compiled at the end of the sixth century. It consists of the *Mishnah* and *Gemara* (commentary on the *Mishnah*), includes both *halakha* and *aggadah*, and uses the same pagination (see Chapter III). It usually refers to the Babylonian *Talmud*, not the *Yerushalmi* (Jerusalem) version.
- TaNaKh.** An acronym for the Jewish Bible, it consists of the **T**orah (the five books of Moses), **N**avi'im (prophets), and **K**etuvim (writings).
- Teshuvah.** Hebrew word for *re-turning* or *returning*, it has also come to mean *repentance*.
- Theory.** The speculation that explains an observed phenomenon, it can also mean an ideal or proposed set of principles.
- Tikkun Olam.** Hebrew phrase for *repairing the world*, it has come to characterize Jewish social action.
- Tikvah.** Hebrew word for *hope*.
- Todah, Todot, Hakarat HaTov.** Hebrew words and phrases for *thanks*, *gratitude*, and *being grateful* (literally *the naming of the good*).
- Topic.** A category of study that implies a body of related facts to be learned.
- Torah.** Hebrew word for *teaching*, *instruction*, or *direction*, it can refer to the *Five Books of Moses*, the *scroll* that contains the *Five Books of Moses*, the *oral law*, and/ or all of Jewish instruction. Christians refer to it as the *Old Testament*.
- Trans-epistemic.** Understanding knowledge across different ways of knowing (coined by Nadinne Cruz).



**Tzaddik, Tsaddik.** From the Hebrew word for *justice* (*tzedek*), it has come to mean a *righteous* or *pious* person. Also used for the leader of a *Hasidic* community.

**Tzedek, Tzedakah.** Hebrew word for *justice* or *righteousness*, it also has come to mean *charity*.

**Tzimzum, Tsimsum.** Hebrew word for *contraction*, it is a mystical concept that explains how God contracted in order for the universe to be created and to have space to exist.

**Tz'hok.** Hebrew word for *laughter*.

**Values.** The principles we live and make judgments by, it is formed by what we think, believe, and do that is good, virtuous, and well-meaning. It is how we believe the world *should* be.

**Yeshivah, yeshivot.** Traditional Jewish academy for study of Jewish sacred texts.

**Yiddish.** The Jewish-German hybrid language that has been spoken by Ashkenazi Jews from eastern and central Europe since the Middle Ages.

**Yir'ah.** Hebrew word for *awe* or *fear*.

**Yisra'el.** Hebrew phrase for *wrestling with God*, it has come to connote *struggling*, *questioning*, and *exploring different perspectives*. It is the name given to Jacob after he wrestled with the unknown man/angel (or with his brother Esav or with himself).

**Yom Kippur.** Jewish *Day of Atonement*, it is a solemn day for fasting and repentance.

**Zay'hut Atz'me.** Hebrew phrase for *self-reflection* or *self-identity*.

**Zaken.** Hebrew word for *elder*.

**Zikaron.** Hebrew word for *memory*, its focus is on *collective* generational memory.

## APPENDIX A

### IRB CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

#### CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Study #: 11-0301. Study Title: Jewishly-Informed Adult Service-Learning

Project Title: Jewishly-Informed Adult Service-Learning

Project Director: H. Svi Shapiro

Student Researcher: Gail Bretan

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### What is the study about?

This is a research project for Gail's doctoral studies at UNCG, School of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations.

I am interested to see if Jewish ways of knowing can augment service-learning activities with mature adults (seniors), and deepen the service, the learning and the community connection. Jewish ways of knowing include activism, awe and radical amazement, b'tzelem Elohim (in the image of God), community, compassion, doing and experiencing, exploring different perspectives, freedom and liberation, giving voice to the voiceless, gratitude, healing, helping the orphan and the widow (the oppressed, powerless, and enslaved), hope, hospitality, humor, identity, integrating emotion and intellect, knowing and acting, memory, mindfulness, naming, justice (tzedakah), questioning, redemption (teshuvah), relationships, responsibility and obligation, Sabbath rest and reflection, service, strangers in a strange land, struggling, Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), tradition, transcendence, and transformation. Service-learning combines meaningful community service with academic materials and deep reflection. There has been much research on service-learning which proves it increases community and civic responsibility, improves critical thinking skills, and fosters positive self-worth. However, it has been used mostly with teens and rarely with seniors, who I feel can benefit just as much, if not more, from this type of model. In addition, there has been limited use of Jewish perspectives, and Jewish ways of knowing, in service-learning models. Therefore, I seek to expand this action-oriented way of learning to seniors, and to add a Jewish component (texts and discussion) to the learning to expand the learning, the service, and the civic engagement.

#### Why are you asking me?

The reason I am asking you to be part of this project is because you have proven to be a responsible volunteer who also appears to be interested in continuing your learning. You have been personally recruited for your gentle honesty (which is much appreciated as I want to know as much as I can from your experience to benefit future participants and communities) and your openness to new ideas and experiences. In order to ensure that group discussions and reflections do not become therapy sessions, individuals with certain diagnosed and self-describe mental health issues (such as severe chronic depression or uncontrolled schizophrenia to name a few) or debilitating physical (lack of mobility) or cognitive (Alzheimer's) dysfunctions are not be appropriate for this particular study. For this study, I am asking mostly retirees and some mature (baby boomers over the age of 50) unemployed individuals. In essence, any individual over the age of 50 would qualify for this study, however, I seek experienced volunteers so that 1) I do not have to spend much time orienting individuals to the service / volunteer experience (but I can do this as part of future studies) and 2) I can study if the learning aspect truly

Consent to participation in Jewishly-Informed Adult Service-Learning Project

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enhanced the service experience and vice versa, since experienced volunteers will be able to determine this. No individual will ever be coerced into participation in this study.

**What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?**

This research project will take place at Jewish Family Service of Greensboro Jewish Federation. The project consists of approximately ten (10) weeks, with a commitment of a minimum of 5 hours a week which will involve two (2) hours weekly for community partnership/service (in the field), one and a half (1 ½) hours for weekly group discussions, and a minimum of half (1/2) an hour for readings and journaling. If you and your fellow participants enjoy this project, there is the possibility of continuing it.

These are the general questions and queries that you will asked during the study: "Tell me about your service experiences"; "Tell me your thoughts about your readings"; "Tell me what you learned about yourself from your readings, your service, the group discussions, and / or your reflections"; "Tell me what you learned from these experiences in reference to society and your place in the world"; "Has your perspective on these (service, readings, journals, discussion, society, self) changed? In what ways?" You may answer, as you feel comfortable doing so, through group discussions, personal journals, and individual conversations/ e-mails.

If you have any questions, please contact Svi Shapiro, Gail's UNCG Dissertation Chair at hsshapir@uncg.edu or (336) 334-3466, so you fully understand to what they are consenting. You can also reach Gail Bretan at (336) 420-0730 or ghbretan@uncg.edu.

**Is there any audio/video recording?**

There will not be any video recording of the sessions. There might be an occasional audio recording just to make sure that everything presented in the study is what actually occurred. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, your confidentiality for things you say on the tape cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to these tapes to the transcriber (who will also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement), to the Dissertation Chair, to the JFS Director, and to this researcher.

**What are the dangers to me?**

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. Minimal risks are similar to the minimal risks involved in any volunteer activity and in the process of learning and growing.

Any stress (physical, psychological or emotional) related to this study will be the same as, or less than, in your regular volunteer services because you will have the support of this student researcher as well as that of the others in the group. You will not be required to share your journals or actively participate in the group discussions if you do not wish to, although we hope you feel comfortable enough to add to the process and everyone's learning.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated or if you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by me, Gail Bretan, student researcher, at (336) 420-0730 or ghbretan@uncg.edu or Svi Shapiro, principal investigator, who may be contacted at hsshapir@uncg.edu or (336) 334-3466.



**Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?**

The community may benefit from your direct service activities and from your broadened viewpoint. It may also benefit from the results of this study and offer more service-learning opportunities for seniors, as well as implementing more Jewish perspectives in educational settings.

**Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?**

You may be able to broaden your perspectives regarding the community and yourself through your service-learning, your discussion with the other service-learners, your readings, and your writings.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?**

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study. Although you will not be paid or compensated financially for your service, you may become richer in experience and knowledge.

**How will you keep my information confidential?**

Privacy refers to a person's desire to control the access of others to themselves. No one will be required to share more than they feel comfortable sharing with others, either in journals or in groups. Your journals are your property but I ask your permission to collect them, if you feel comfortable doing so, and using quotations from them as long as there is no personal identifiable information about you since pseudonyms will be employed. These journals will be returned to you within 3 months.

Confidentiality refers to how your identifiable private information will be handled, managed, and disseminated. All information obtained in this study is held strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law (only the case if you are planning to harm yourself or others). We will do everything possible to make sure that your information is held in strict confidence. We will not use any identifying information in reporting the results of this study - we will use pseudonyms. All information will be kept in a locked file cabinet and all data on the computer is password protected.

Maintaining confidentiality of information collected from you means that only the research team can identify your responses.

**What if I want to leave the study?**

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. In the highly unlikely case that more risks present than were initially identified, the researcher will stop the study.

**What about new information/changes in the study?**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**

By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read, you fully understand the contents of this document, and you are openly and willingly consenting to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this study described to you by Gail Bretan.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX B

### CRITICAL REFLECTION HANDOUT

#### **Critical Reflection**

It does not mean “negative criticism.”

##### **What is reflection?**

The root of the word “reflection” is the Latin *reflectere*. *Flectere* means “to bend”, so *reflectere* increases the inflection – “to bend back”, or to bend again or double-take. The meaning of the word has come to be interpreted as an introspective “bending in”, i.e., a reviewing of our own inner process of thinking and feeling (from Bleakley, 1999).

John Dewey is considered a key originator of thinking about reflection (Dewey, 1933). He thought of it as a “special form of problem solving thinking to resolve an issue which involved active chaining, a careful ordering of ideas linking each with its predecessors” (from Hatton & Smith, 1995, p. 33).

##### **Types of reflection**

**1. Technical reflection** is concerned with efficiency and effectiveness of means to achieve certain ends, i.e. the effective application of skills and knowledge. Knowledge is used to control the environment, and such knowledge is viewed as objective and value-free.

**2. Practical reflection** allows for examination of goals and assumptions on which they are based and recognizes that meanings are negotiated through language and communication. Knowledge is viewed as socially constructed and individuals seek to develop a sense of shared values and norms within their particular contexts.

**3. Critical reflection** adds moral and ethical criteria such as equity and justice, locating analysis of personal action within wider historical, political, and social contexts. Knowledge is viewed as being constructed by particular interests and maintained through relationships of power.

**Critical thinking** and critical analysis involve processes of abstract reasoning, detecting the assumptions underlying *another’s position or text* and identifying how such assumptions serve particular interests.

Critical Reflection, on the other hand, is a process attached to looking at one’s *own positioning*, requiring a level of self-awareness, and is generally more difficult because of the unquestioning acceptance of many unconsciously-held beliefs and assumptions, particularly those that are supported by our social institutions and structures. Given *the personal* nature of critical reflection, I will make this explicit by referring to this process as **critical self-reflection**. It is important to note that a capacity for critical self-reflection enhances capacities for critical thinking and analysis (Mezirow, 1990).

**Adapted with permission from Kath Fisher (2012), [Kath.fisher@scu.edu.au](mailto:Kath.fisher@scu.edu.au)**

## APPENDIX C

### CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS

...a vision of the postmodern curriculum that is radically eclectic, determined in the context of relatedness, recursive in its complexity, autobiographically intuitive, Aesthetically intersubjective, embodied, phenomenological, experiential, simultaneously quantum and cosmic, hopeful in its constructive dimension, radical in its deconstructive movement, liberating in its poststructural intents, empowering in its spirituality, ironic in its kaleidoscopic sensibilities, and ultimately, a hermeneutic search for greater understanding that motivates and satisfies us on the journey (Slattery, 2006, p. 297).

The goal of this appendix is to provide more detail, depth, and design to the creation of the curriculum for the *Project*. This chapter is about the methodology for creating and implementing the “curriculum” for the *Project* as an *alternative* learning community. I use the term *curriculum* very loosely and lightly, especially if one thinks of curriculum as the courses taught at an educational institution that constitutes a knowledge base. This *Project* occurs within a space that is not at a *traditional* educational institution and within a space that is not looking for a specific knowledge base or cannon but seeks to expand knowledge to multiple and sometimes conflicting ways of knowing. This curriculum is more in keeping with Slattery’s (2006) observation that “the art and science of interpretation is the central enterprise of school curriculum” (p. 116). This appendix chapter is written in the present tense as the researcher and the participants continue to explore this art and science of interpretation in developing the *Project* curriculum. The aim of this appendix is to add information not presented in previous chapters

## Theoretical Background

Since there is a major lack of scholarly work surrounding older (*mature*) adult Jewish service-learning, I knew that I would need to build the *Project* design from the bottom up. Since a majority of Jewish service-learning programs are geared towards teens, and, as has been explored in previous chapters, adult learning needs and learning methodologies are different than that of younger participants, a new curriculum needed to be created - the *Jewishly-Informed Mature Adult Service-Learning* model. This curriculum combines a holistic approach to the individual (emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual) with a holistic approach to the needs of society and social institutions (such as education, religion, and government) and a holistic approach to curriculum (including paradigms, ideologies, philosophies, design, and planning). Below are many of the theories that inform this *Project*

Informed by Goodlad's (1979/1994, in Joseph, 2000, p. 10) reasons for education, I explore curriculum through his four goals of schooling: (1) academic (functional literacy), (2) vocational (work production and economic responsibility), (3) social and civic (socialization in a complex society), and (4) personal (personal fulfillment through education). All of these reasons for education are now part of the adult service-learning educational curriculum, with the *service* aspect fitting into the vocational slot.

Informed by Eisner and Vallance's (1986, in Joseph, 2000, pp. 11-12) goals and assumptions embedded within curriculum, I view this curriculum through their five orientations: (1) development of cognitive processes (so one can learn virtually anything), (2) curriculum as technology (an efficient technology of instruction), (3) self-

actualization / curriculum as consummatory experience (personal purpose, integration, and growth), (4) social reconstruction – relevance (social over individual needs), and (5) academic rationalism (access to greatest ideas and objects – from a Western cultural tradition), and Vallance’s two additional orientations of 1) personal success (studying business but not liberal arts) and 2) personal commitment (to the joys and hard-work of learning). All these goals and assumptions within the curriculum are within the adult service-learning curriculum except the personal success orientation. It is not that there should not be a goal of personal success for the adult service-learners; it is just that the course of study should not be limited to only business practices and Western (business) orientations. That focus implies sustaining the business and financial immorality of “bottom-line” ethics that led directly or indirectly to the collapse of our financial system. Social reconstruction is the opposite orientation and one of the major hubs of this curriculum. Reconstructionism explores serious economic and social problems and works towards new social orders. The economic problems that so many people have recently endured, including the service-learning retirees in this study, creates the same pain as the populations they will be working with in non-profit organizations and schools. The participants will be reconstructing themselves while they reconstruct the programs and classrooms they serve.

Informed by Klohr’s (in Schubert, 1997, pp. 178-180) nine commonalities (or tendencies) of reconceptualized curriculum thought (and emancipatory theorizing), I examine, (1) the organic view of nature (we are embedded, not observers), (2) individuals as creators of knowledge and culture (everyone is a knowledge factory), (3) the



experiential base of method (autobiography in education experience), (4) pre-conscious experience (mind/body interaction), (5) new sources of literature for curriculum (literature as human phenomenon), (6) liberty and higher levels of consciousness (wide-awake multiple perspectives), (7) means and ends that include diversity and pluralism (appreciating and embracing differences), (8) political and social reconceptualization (viewing oppressive and repressive factors, especially related to work), and (9) new language forms (how language affects communication and world-view). All of these commonalities are incorporated into the adult service learning curriculum so that adult service-learner can be a holistic and pluralistic knowledge creator and perspective embracer. Reconceptualism ideology is more of an orientation than a dogma. Proponents of this ideology claim that what is missing in schools is “a deep respect for personal purpose, lived experience, for the life of imagination, and for those forms of understanding that resist dissection and measurement” (Eisner, 2002, p. 77). That is the crux of the *Project* – to bring back into the classroom the lived experience, respect, personal purpose, creativity, and multiple ways of knowing that are missing.

Reconceptualists focus on understanding the nature of experience, thereby moving from a behavioristic to a phenomenologic approach. Foremost in that formulation is the *lived* experience, followed by the idea of respect, and the imagination forged from these. As Cowhey (2006) explains, “imagination is more important than knowledge” (p. 10). Of course Slattery (2006) chimes in when he declares that “engaging in the curriculum in aesthetic and imaginative ways becomes a moral responsibility for

all educators” (p. 282). For the adult learner, imagining a different way of education is part of the process.

Informed by Black curriculum orientations I explore the Afrocentric curriculum (Diaspora merged with a positive, self-sufficient future) and social reconstructionism (challenging and changing unjust arrangements). I discover the usefulness of the social reconstructionism model in designing and implementation of the adult service-learning curriculum. If “we are not, in fact ‘other’” (Slattery, 2006, p. 167) then it is our responsibility to make the fragmentation whole. Within a collaborative classroom, there is no room for unjust arrangements. Applying this to the Jewish Diaspora, a “Jewish centric” curriculum would bring those in the Jewish community together to embody the opportunities and possibilities for transformations from Jewish values and resources that could benefit American culture. The emancipation of Jewish and Black people makes it easier to reflect on the lessons from our common culture’s back onto and connecting our people. I am not advocating a separatist mindset; just a voice among many to “degenerate the hegemonic assumptions of Eurocentric pedagogies and curricula” (Kharem, 2000, p. 35). In addition, the “emancipation from the linguistic and cognitive fetters of the culture” (Eisner, 2002, p. 51) is one of the aims of this adult service-learning project. I envision an “ethno-centric expansion embracing” orientation.

Informed by gender studies, the *Project* curriculum acknowledges the “intense pressure on people to conform to traditional gender role norms” (Slattery, 2006, p. 152). This includes the occupations and roles people may, or may not, have pursued based on community, cultural, societal, and familial messages that might need to be unlearned.

One role of the participants is as senior citizen; another is as global citizen. This includes their “volunteer” roles and the “caring economy” (Eisler, 1988, 2000, 2007) that is often devalued. From Feminist theory I also learn that the dialectical relationship between feminist scholarship and feminist activism is often blurred, and that invisibility and oppression can blossom to liberation. Naples & Bojar (2002) claim that teachers and students use the knowledge they teach and learn in the classroom to inform their activism outside of it. I think Jewish epistemology has a similar perspective. Therefore, for purposes of this *Project*, I do not use the term *teacher* (unless it is in a quote or the wording of an author), but frame that positionality as *facilitator* or *co-learner*. This is in keeping with the research on power dynamics in classroom and educational settings. In addition, feminist theory informs this *Project* not only with activist values, but with the values of collaboration and subversion. Therefore the curriculum includes collaborative learning, subversive teaching, and activism. The methodology in this study is collaborative, as well. Many of the ideas that inform the curriculum also are ideas that Jewish people have been utilizing for centuries, such as Hevruta.

Informed by Queer pedagogy, I discover boundaries, identity and identification, trauma, ignorance, and disruption of normalcy. I found all of these orientations to be extremely useful for adult service-learners who experience a disruption in their identities and identifications as they enter new stages in their lives. I learn that being in this *space* or in the *betweenness* (Shlasko, 2005, p. 123) can be awkward or liberating, and can open up opportunities for increasing perspectives and perceptions. This *Project* will allow many “spaces” for exploration of identity, hegemony, and boundaries.

Informed by interdependence and ecological sustainability, I understand that “nature is a complex open system relying on diversity, decay, and reconstruction and not a closed system that is doomed to entropy (Slattery, 2006, p. 204). This highlights the importance of a holistic approach to education and the interconnecting web of life. I am sure that the *Project* will have its cycles. These ebbs and flows will not be fought; we will follow them to where they take us.

Informed by creativity and the aesthetic, the continuum and continuity of art present a view into the proleptic moment (past-present-future simultaneously) and provides hope. In the adult service-learning curriculum, the creative and the aesthetic combine through the arts, the lived experiences, the inquiry, and the discussion. Learning does not take place in a vacuum or by single subjects. Since chaos and complexity are “a natural state of the universe...and order can emerge out of chaos” (Slattery, 2006, p. 273), the curriculum might be viewed as “nebulous.” These many parts and this chaos open up new avenues and combinations of thought and action that might have previously been restricted and limited by an unbending structure.

From adult education and learning theory and practice I recognize that adults need to be part of the process as self-directed learners. Also revealing is that there is a social component to learning, as well as personal development, self-fulfillment, and pleasure derived from learning. Therefore, I incorporate all of these factors into the *Project*. From lifelong-learning I realize that learning does not have to stop once people cease their formal education. Informal and alternative educational experiences and settings have a great impact on people as they grow older and are easier to access and sometimes create

greater personal connection, motivation, and satisfaction than earlier educational practices and patterns. From service-learning praxis I comprehend that partnerships, academic rigor, reflection, and service can be successfully combined and can become greater than the sum of each part.

Informed by Judaism and Jewish “action and social action-oriented” epistemology (ways of knowing) I appreciate that knowing is through the powerfully embodied performance of doing and reflection, that these epistemologies have made Judaism a great religion and culture that has survived when other religions and cultures have not. Many people of the world, including Jewish people, have lost sight of these epistemologies and values and their potential contribution to the world. That is why, of course, Jewish ways of knowing are prominent in this *Project*.

Since service-learning for adults is not a normal component within educational settings, the ideas and formalizations of normalcy are deconstructed and studied, to disrupt the produced thoughts of these adult service-learners, to learn and unlearn. This follows Slattery’s (2006) explanation of chaos and “flip-overs” within the classroom setting. Each session will present a central attractor (a theme), then there will be discussion (unpredictable but interactive within the theme), and flip-over events might happen and “may lead to a dynamic integration of new ideas into the curriculum” (Slattery, 2006, p. 278). The integration of all the ideas mentioned above and in previous chapters is the impetus to formation of the curriculum, and these curricular theories and practices continue to transform the *Project*.

## Curricular Design

This curricular design evolved and transformed over many years, as I am certain it will continue to evolve and transform. That is why curriculum development, as Eisner (2002) clarifies, “is the process of transforming images and aspirations about education into programs that will effectively realize the visions that initiated the process” (p. 127).

The transformation that creates this *Project* is a novel and timely reinterpretation and approach to an educational structure. Of course, as Davis et al. (2008) reminds us “learning is about transforming what is known” (p. 4). It is that transformative thinking and *doing* that cause Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) to reveal that “the way we define thinking has a profound impact on the nature of our schools, the role that the teachers play in the world, and the shape that society will ultimately take” (p. 301). This *Project* and its curricular development are in this tradition of transformative learning (King, 2009). In addition to *curriculum development*, there is *lesson development* which also has a recursive structure and this recursive process is one where the “starting place of each stage is the output of the previous stage” (Davis et al., 2008, p. 26).

Flexible scheduling is an important consideration. The active role of participants in co-(re)creating the curriculum as it was and is being simultaneously studied added another layer to the *Project* and improved the curriculum. In putting all the pieces together, it was important for me to have in this *Project* a sense of unconditional love and acceptance, not just of the individuals but also of their differing viewpoints, in which humor, fun and non-defensive questioning and listening was the norm; where the “students” determine the direction of their learning; where the Jewish epistemologies are

uncovered, noticed, enacted, embodied, and enjoyed through the combination of the service, the reflection, and the learning. From these fragments, a loose framework was built on the three components of service-learning practice 1) service that fulfills a community need, 2) critical reflection that is deep and, and 3) academic learning that brings the participants together for classroom sessions every week (which became every month) and that augments the service and reflective portions of the *Project*. Each of these learning sessions, titled “gatherings,” consists of four parts.

**OPENING.** Part one opens with participants sharing their “service” experiences, creating an atmosphere of diversity in providing service, and exposing the participants to other populations and ways of service. Emphasis is on exploration of societal issues, community need, and problem-solving, using the learning from past “gatherings” to scaffold subsequent learning and to build the community of learners (the first session was an orientation and sharing of service activities).

**CONCEPT.** Part two revolves around particular action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing (as outlined in Chapter III), paired with experiential activities to embody the value of the week, and a Bible text, Jewish prayer, or writing of a Jewish philosopher or author, which would further reinforce the theme and activity of the session and give it added weight, structure, agency, and embodiment. The experiential activity is performed in pairs (*Hevruta*) and then as a group.

**DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION.** For the third part of each “gathering” there is discussion of the themes, activities, texts, reflections, that lead the participants running the featured theme through the prism of their service, society, and their own

lives. Prompts and critical questions are asked. Discoursing, reflecting on, and sharing their viewpoints of the text and of their learning are a natural progression.

**CLOSING.** This last part summarizes the Jewish epistemology of the session, and the service-learners are given “homework” assignments to be further reflected upon, journaled, and discussed. The participants return to their service while contemplating and incorporating their learning and reflection. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues. Prior to each session, a summary of all themes is presented and explored are sent to the participants. The participants continue providing service at their various Jewish and non-Jewish community and non-profit agencies, seeking to thoughtfully and systematically address authentic community need. Below are the lesson plans for the classroom “gatherings” sessions.

There were seven gatherings and these seven lessons are included in this section. In addition, there are additional lessons provided. Some of the lessons will be in great detail, some will just be sketches. Each lesson follows the four part format outlined above and in Chapter IV, and presented in the following format,

**Title of lesson**

**Goals:**

**Objectives:**

**Process and Content:**

**1. Part one is the opening. Sharing service experiences through previous learning:** Discussing their service, through the prism of their previous classroom learning session.

**2. Part two is the social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing themes:** Learning about, enacting and embodying another social-action and social-justice-oriented Jewish value. Performing and experiencing that way of knowing via activities in pairs (Hevruta) and then as a group. Reading a Bible text, Jewish prayer, or the writings of a Jewish philosopher or author, reinforcing the theme of the session and the activity.



**3. Part three is discussion and reflection.** Discoursing, reflecting on, sharing and linking their viewpoints of the activities, text, learning, and service.

**4. Part four is the closing. Summary of session and homework assignments:** Summarizing the Jewish ways of knowing of the session. Receiving “homework” assignments to be reflected upon, journaled, and processed discussed during non-service and non-class time. Returning to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues at subsequent sessions.

### **Assessment**

Regarding assessment of these learning goals and objects, a rubric was developed to capture achievement of the aims of the program. Rubrics are very helpful in ascertaining achievement of goals and objectives listed since,

The main function of rubrics is to allow you to match the performance to a description rather than immediately judge it. This is hugely important. What is at issue is the nature of evidence. The rubric is a bridge between what you see and the judgment of learning (Brookhart, 2013, p. 22).

Therefore, all assessments will fall within the following rubric, which is set up in a 5 point pattern. Arranged according to the ascending terms of *beginning*, *developing*, *capable*, *experienced*, and *exceptional*, each column defines the criterion for achievement in learning, reflection, and service. For consistency, each lesson is measured according to this rubric. Self-assessment may also follow this rubric design.

Table 2. Five-Point Project Assessment Rubric

<b>Researcher / Participant observation</b> (criterion)	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Capable</b>	<b>Experienced</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
Participation during gathering discussion	<b>Barely</b> participates	<b>Occasionally</b> participates and is sometimes helpful to other participants' awareness	<b>Regularly</b> participates and offers occasional insights for the group	<b>Consistently</b> participates and also discovers insights into self	<b>Fully</b> participates and integrates participants' and self-insights
Vocabulary (using new concepts in speech)	<b>Asking</b> for meaning of new concepts	<b>Understanding</b> new concepts	<b>Using</b> new concept correctly	<b>Thinking</b> about how to use new concepts in life	<b>Incorporating</b> new concepts and vocabulary into lifestyle
Reflections	<b>Technical reflection.</b> Knowledge is objective and value free.	<b>Practical reflection.</b> Understanding that knowledge is socially constructed	<b>Practical self-reflection.</b> Acknowledging one's own social construction of knowledge	<b>Critical reflection.</b> Placing moral and ethical criteria to knowledge	<b>Critical self-reflection.</b> Adding personal moral and ethical commitment to knowledge.
Writings	<b>Technical Writing.</b> Writing that is objective and value free.	<b>Practical Writing.</b> Writing that understands the concept of social construction.	<b>Introspective Writing.</b> Writing that is personally placed in social construction of reality.	<b>Critical Writing.</b> Writing that places moral and ethical values on social construction.	<b>Transformative Writing.</b> Writing that presents multiple or integrated viewpoints, transforms present reality and is trans-disciplinary and trans-epistemic.
Discussions	<b>Superficial.</b> No insights into self or others offered.	<b>Engaged.</b> Listens to others and presents occasional insights.	<b>In-depth.</b> Listens to others and presents regular insights.	<b>Insightful.</b> Listens to others as one means of self and community-discovery.	<b>Integrative.</b> Integrates discussions into multiple processes of continual exploration.

Observation	Beginning	Developing	Capable	Experienced	Exceptional
Actions	Technical. Doing the task without understanding	Practical. Realizing the task is socially constructed.	Introspective. Starting to bring the self into actions.	Critical. Considering the moral and ethical nature of actions.	Transformative. Deriving new configurations and applications from self- and community discovered morally imperatives.
Additional study beyond gatherings	<b>No</b> additional learning beyond gatherings.	<b>Rarely</b> asks for additional materials from the facilitator.	<b>Occasionally</b> asks for, looks up or seeks additional information.	<b>Often</b> searches for additional information on subject.	<b>Actively</b> pursues additional information, sources, and resources.
Service	Service is <b>busywork</b> .	Service is <b>helpful to agency staff</b> .	Service <b>helps many agency clients</b> .	Service helps the agency <b>fulfill mission (but not necessarily community need)</b> .	Service <b>truly fulfills a community need</b> as outlined by clients, agency, and community.

Assessment instrument developed by Gail Bretan, 2011. Revised 2012.

## LESSON PLANS

### Gathering # 1. Topic: Orientation. Todot (Gratitude)

#### Goals:

1. To become oriented with Jewish ways of knowing
2. To become oriented to service-learning modalities
3. To become oriented to critical reflection and critical self-reflection techniques
4. To become aware of the power of Todot (gratitude)

#### Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to explain what service-learning is.
2. Participants will follow-up with agencies and work together with agency staff to create their service project that fulfills community needs.
3. Participants will demonstrate use of the three types of reflection identified by Kath Fisher in her handout, and by the 3<sup>rd</sup> session show that they are capable of utilizing critical self-reflection techniques (within their journals, e-mails, and discussions).
4. Participants will broaden their use of gratitude actions at home, at gatherings, and at service.

## Process and Content:

### 1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes)

- Go around circle and ask participants to share where they provide service, what they do, and how long they have been providing service. Discuss community need.
- (For orientation); Set ground rules: go around and ask the participants to share what they think should be the rules of the group. Write on large post-it. Make sure that confidentiality, respect, being open to other people's ideas, being kind, etc., are explicitly discovered and acknowledge. Provide handout about service-learning, highlight sections, and discuss. Provide handout about Critical Reflection (Kath Fisher), highlight sections, and discuss. Explain the flow of the sessions.

### 2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)

- Introduce the idea of Jewish ways of knowing (can hand out chapter 3 to review at home). Present the topic of gratitude.
- **Hevruta:** Have participants talk in Hevruta / dyads/ pairs about gratitude (dyads can be with person they are next to or someone they don't know, or count off). What are they grateful for?
- Then have the groups come together, and have participants go around and explain what they are grateful for. Give examples. Can write their ideas on giant post notes on wall. Can comment on themes. Can rank them. Can discuss items missed.
- **Text:** Modeh Ani ("I am thankful/grateful") and Asher Yatzar ("who fashioned openings") prayers. Use the siddur (Jewish Prayer book) or this text:
  - Modeh Ani prayer: I give thanks before You, living and eternal King, who has returned (restored) my soul into me in compassion. Your faithfulness is immense.
  - Asher Yatzar prayer: Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who fashioned [hu]man with wisdom and created within him [and her] many openings and many cavities. It is obvious and known before Your Throne of Glory that if but one of them were to be ruptured or but one of them were to be blocked it would be impossible to survive and to stand before You even momentarily. Blessed are You, Lord, who heals all flesh and acts wondrously.

### 3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)

- Questions: Did these prayers change your thoughts about gratitude. Do you agree with these prayers? What additional things are you grateful for that we haven't mentioned previously. How do you show gratitude at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of gratitude in society or about your enactment of gratitude towards them? Do you think there is a difference between being grateful, being thankful, gratitude, thanks, or thanksgiving? Explain.

### 4. Summary of session and homework. (15 minutes)

- Review the ground rules and re-iterate that what is said in the group is confidential.
- Review what service-learning is and ask participants to go to their agencies to brainstorm "community need"
- Review the Jewish text of *Modeh Ani* ("I am thankful") and *Asher Yatzar* ("who fashioned openings") prayers

- Review Critical reflection handout and how it ties into the homework assignment
- Review homework assignment: Observe and journal about how you show gratitude at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact gratitude. When you are watching the news, how is the word gratitude used? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing gratitude?
- Confirm date and time of next “gathering”
- Participants return to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying *todot* (gratitude) affected their service, their life and home, and their community.

## **Gathering # 2. Topic: Tzedakah (justice and charity)**

### **Goals:**

1. To become oriented with additional Jewish ways of knowing
2. To become further involved in service-learning modalities
3. To begin the process of critical reflection and critical self-reflection techniques
4. To become aware of the power of *Tzedakah* (justice and charity)

### **Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name and explain two Jewish ways of knowing
2. 2a. Participants will be able to identify the difference between volunteerism and service-learning.
3. 2b. Participants will identify for the group the community need they are fulfilling within the Project.
4. Participants will demonstrate use of the three types of reflection identified by Kath Fisher in her handout, and by the 3<sup>rd</sup> session show that they are capable of utilizing critical self-reflection techniques (within their journals, e-mails, and discussions).
5. Participants will broaden their uses of *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude) in actions at home, at gatherings, and at service.

### **Process and Content:**

#### **1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes)**

- Go around circle and ask participants to share previous week’s service-projects through the lens of last week’s way of knowing – gratitude. Share journal writings and thoughts.
- Questions for discussions include: What did you notice about your gratitude style? How do you show your gratitude at your service-project? Is it the same or different than how you show gratitude to your family and friends? Why do you think that is?

#### **2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)**

- Introduction of the topic of justice. Write their ideas on giant post notes on wall from the questions asked. Some questions to ask the participants: What do you think justice is? Do you think it is the same in English/ America and in Judaism? Why or why not? Do you

know the Hebrew word for justice? How do you know when someone is acting just – or when you are acting just? Are justice and charity the same thing?

- **Hevruta and group experiences.** (Preparation: Take Rambam's 8 levels of tzedakah below format larger, with spaces in between lines, remove the numbers in front of each statement - and change #1 to start with "When helping sustain..", - cut them into strips, and place each set in its own plastic bag). Give each dyad (*hevruta* group) a plastic bag with the cut statements in it and ask participants to place these statements in the order they think they should appear (lowest to highest). Then have the groups come together to "decide" what the rank order should be – a consensus. (After the experience, the list below would be circulated to participants in its entirety.)
  - **Rambam organized the different levels of tzedakah (and charity) into a list from the least to the most honorable.**
    9. The highest form of *tzedakah* is to help sustain a person before they become impoverished by offering a substantial gift in a dignified manner, or by extending a suitable loan, or by helping them find employment, or by establishing them in business so as to make it unnecessary for them to become dependent on others or to ask for assistance. When donations are given grudgingly, with pain, or unhappily.
    10. When the donor and recipient do not know each other - their actions or their circumstances.
    11. When the donor knows the recipient's identity, but the receiver is unaware of the source.
    12. When the recipient is aware of the giver's identity, but the donor does not know the identity of the person receiving the tzedakah.
    13. When one gives directly to the poor without being asked or solicited.
    14. When one gives directly to the poor upon being asked or solicited.
    15. When one gives less than one should, but does so cheerfully.
    16. When donations are given grudgingly.

(*Mishnah Torah, Laws of Gifts to Poor People, 10:7-14*), Explain that Maimonides, often called by his acronym RaMBaM (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon), was a 12th century Jewish scholar and physician. Rambam wrote a code of Jewish law, the *Mishnah Torah*, based on the Rabbinic oral tradition.
- **Text:** "Justice, justice, shall you pursue." – Deuteronomy 16:20.

### 3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)

- Questions: Why did you choose the ranking that you did? Did anyone else's argument convince you to change your mind? Why or why not? What beliefs do you hold that made you choose that order? Do you think other people would agree with you or with Maimonides' interpretations? Why do you think the word "Justice" is repeated? What is the difference between Justice and Charity - how are they similar? Give examples from your life. Do you agree with Rambam's ranking? Why or why not? How do you think you show justice at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of justice in society or about your enactment of justice towards them?

### 4. Summary of session and homework. (15 minutes)

- Review the concept of Justice and Rambam's 8 levels.

- Review the text of “Justice, justice shall you seek.”
- Review homework assignment. Observe and journal about how you show justice (or charity) at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact justice. When you are watching the news, how is the word justice used? How have you used the word in your life? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing justice?
- Confirm date and time of next “gathering”.
- Returning to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning
- Then the cycle repeats itself and continues.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying justice and charity affected their service, their life and home, and their community. Does it change how they viewed the Jewish ways of knowing of justice, charity, and gratitude (previous explored Jewish ways of knowing)?

### **Gathering # 3. Topic: Hahnasat Orhim (Hospitality)**

#### **Goals:**

1. To become oriented to additional Jewish ways of knowing
2. To become further invested in service-learning modalities
3. To understand the difference between technical, practical, and critical reflection.
4. To become aware of the power of *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality)

#### **Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name and explain three Jewish ways of knowing
2. Participants will be able to identify themselves as not just volunteers but also as service-learners.
3. Participants will demonstrate use of the three types of reflection identified by Kath Fisher in her handout within their journals, e-mails, and discussions.
4. Participants will broaden their use of *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality), *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude) in actions at home, at gatherings, and at service.

#### **Process and Content:**

##### **1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes)**

- Go around circle and ask participants to share previous week’s service-projects through the lens of last session’s way of knowing – justice (and the previous sessions of gratitude). Share journal writings and thoughts.
- Questions for discussions include: What did you notice about your “justice” and “gratitude” styles? How did you show justice and charity at your service-project? Is it the same or different than how you show justice and charity to your family and friends? Why do you think that is? Other observations?

##### **2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)**

- Introduction of the topic of hospitality. Some questions to ask the participants: What do you think hospitality is? How do you know when someone is being hospitable – or when

you are acting hospitably? Write their ideas on giant post notes on wall from their answers

- **Hevruta and then group activity.** Share in dyad and then back in group setting. Give an example of when you or someone you know were acting with hospitality. Give an example when of when you or some you know was being inhospitable. How did you know the difference?
- **Text.** Biblical story of Avraham (Abraham) welcoming and providing hospitality towards his guests (Genesis 18) to highlight the way of knowing and doing through hospitality. Read out loud together or have someone volunteer to read it. Obtain feedback from group about the implicit and explicit “showings” (actions), beliefs, and/or feelings within the text related to hospitality. Remind the participants that Avraham did this shortly after he had been circumcised at age 99 and what an additional layer this might add to the story. Explain about the Jewish term *Hahnasat Orhim*.
  - Genesis - Chapter 18 is translated here as: 18:1. The LORD appeared to Avraham (Abraham) near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. 2. And Avraham looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran to the entrance of his tent to greet them and bowed to the ground. 3. He said, "My lords, if I have found favor in your eyes, do not go pats your servant by. 4. Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under the tree. 5. Let me get you some bread so you may refresh yourselves to then go on your way--now that you have come to your servant." And they answered, "Very well. Do as you say." 6. So Avraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick, get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some cakes." 7. Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them, and waited on them under the tree while they ate."

### 3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)

- Questions: Why did you choose the examples that you did? Did anyone else's example or argument convince you to change your mind about what is hospitality? Why or why not? What beliefs do you hold that made you choose that order? Do you think other people would agree with you or with the group's definitions and interpretations of hospitality?
- Questions: Why do you think the hospitality is such a strong value within the Jewish culture, and is that value also implemented in American Jewry or American society (such as bringing a stranger home for the Passover Seder)? What is the difference between hospitality and being welcomed - how are they similar? Give examples from your life. How do you think Sarah in the Bible story felt about hospitality? If one "goes along" with hospitality actions, can one begin to feel more hospitable? Why or why not? Is hospitality related to food and why? How else could one show their hospitality besides using food? How do you think you show your hospitality at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of hospitality in society or about your enactment of hospitality towards them?

### 4. Summary of session and homework. (15 minutes)

- Review the concept of *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality).



- Review the biblical text/ story.
- Review homework assignment. Observe and journal about how you show hospitality at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact hospitality. When you are watching the news, how is the word hospitality used or shown? How have you used the word and enactment in your life? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing hospitality?
- Confirm date and time of next “gathering”.
- Participants return to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues at the next gathering.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying hospitality affected their service, their life and home, and their community. Does it change how they viewed the Jewish ways of knowing of *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality) and the previously explored ways of knowing - *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude)?

## **Gathering # 4. Topic: K'hilah (Community)**

### **Goals:**

1. To become oriented to additional Jewish ways of knowing
2. To identify as service-learner
3. To understand the difference between introspection, critical reflection and self-critical reflection
4. To become aware of the power of *K'hilah* (Community)

### **Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name and explain four Jewish ways of knowing
2. Participants will be able to articulate why and how they are service-learners.
3. Participants will demonstrate understanding of the differences between introspection, critical reflection and self-critical reflection
4. Participants will broaden their uses of *K'hilah* (Community), *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality), *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude) in actions at home, at gatherings, and at service.

### **Process and Content:**

#### **1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes)**

- Go around circle and ask participants to share previous week's service-projects through the lens of last session's way of knowing – *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality), (and the previous sessions of gratitude and justice). Share journal writings and thoughts.
- Questions for discussions include: What did you notice about your “Hospitality,” justice and gratitude styles? How do you show *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality) at your service-project? Is it the same or different than how you show hospitality to your family and friends? Why do you think that is?

#### **2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)**

- Introduction of the topic of *K'hilah* (Community). What do you think community is? How do you know when someone is part of a community? How do you know when they are excluded from a community?
- **Hevruta and then group activity.** The assignment: Name all the communities in which you belong. You could also rank them in perceived importance.
- **Text:** Introduce the idea of “Holy Gathering”. “And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy gathering; you shall do no labor; it is a day when the horn is sounded”. - Numbers 29:1

### 3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)

- Questions: Why did you choose the communities that you did? Did anyone else’s ideas help you add to your list? Why or why not? What beliefs do you hold that made you choose that order? Do you think other people would agree with you or with the group’s definitions and interpretations of communities?
- Questions: Why do you think the community is such a strong value within the Jewish culture? Are all “gatherings” holy? Are all communities holy? Do you consider your service-learning gathering as a holy community? Why or why not? What is your experience between the different communities you are part of? Give examples from your life. How do you think you show your “community connections” at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of community in society or about your enactment of community towards them?

### 4. Summary of session and homework. (15 minutes)

- Review the concept of *K'hilah* (Community)
- Review the biblical text/ story.
- Review homework assignment. Observe and journal about how you show community at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact community. When you are watching the news, how is the word community used or shown? How have you used the word and enactment community in your life? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing community?
- Confirm date and time of next “gathering”.
- Participants return to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues at the next gathering.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying hospitality affected their service, their life and home, and their community. Does it change how they viewed the Jewish ways of knowing of *K'hilah* (Community), and the previously explored ways of knowing - *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality), *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude)?

## **Gathering # 5. Topic: *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God) Divine spark & Otherness.**

### **Goals:**

1. To become oriented to additional Jewish ways of knowing
2. To see the benefit of service-learning over plain volunteerism
3. To start including different types of reflection in discussion and writings.
4. To become aware of the power of *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God) - Divine spark & Otherness.

### **Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name and explain four Jewish ways of knowing
2. Participants will be able to understand and appreciate the greater impact of service-learning on them and their communities
3. Participants will demonstrate the ability to use and identify differences between technical, practical, introspective, critical, and self-critical reflections
4. Participants will broaden their uses of *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God) - Divine spark & Otherness., *K'hilah* (Community), *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality), *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude) in actions at home, at gatherings, and at service.

### **Process and Content:**

#### **1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes).**

- Go around circle and ask participants to share previous week's service-projects through the lens of last session's way of knowing – *K'hilah* (Community), and the previous ones- *Hahnasat Orhim* (hospitality), *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude). Share journal writings and thoughts.
- Questions for discussions include: What did you notice about your community/ communities, hospitality, justice and gratitude styles? How do you show community at your service-project? Is it the same or different than how you show community and relationships to your family and friends? Why do you think that is?

#### **2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)**

- Introduction of the topic of *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God) - Divine spark & Otherness. What do you think divine spark is? How is it manifested? How do you know when you discover divine spark? Do people show or hide their divine spark or do we choose to ignore it?
- **Hevruta and then a group activity.** The Breath of God. Guided visualization of God breathing “divine spark” (life) into their nostrils as was done with Adam (He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being - Genesis 2:7)
- Biblical text: “*And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth.’ And God created man in His image, the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.* Genesis 1:26-27. Read out loud together or have someone volunteer to read it. Introduce the idea of “divine spark” and Buber (I-Thou) versus Levinas (responsibility to others without reciprocal expectations). Give background info on both philosophers and their philosophies.

### 3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)

- Questions: How did it feel to receive the “divine spark” during the guided visualization? Did you think of anyone else “receiving” it when you were experiencing it? What are your beliefs related to the idea of divine spark? Do you think other people would agree with you or with the group’s definitions and interpretations of divine spark?
- Questions: Have you ever seen the “divine spark” in another person? How did it happen? What happened? Describe it. What did you think about the Divine making male and female at the same time? What does that mean to you? What does that mean to society? Why do you think the concept of “divine spark” is a strong value within the Jewish culture? Do you ever consider “divine spark” in your interactions with Others and in your service-learning? Why or why not?
- Regarding Buber and Levinas – which philosophy is the most close to your viewpoint of interactions with other people? Why? Give examples from your life. How do you think you show your “divine spark” at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of “divine spark” in society or about your enactment *B’tzelem Elohim* towards them? What is it about these divine relationships that drive us?

### 4. Summary of session and homework. (15 minutes)

- Review the concept of “*B’tzelem Elohim*” (in the image of God).
- Review the activity, biblical text/ story.
- Review homework assignment. Assignment: Observe and journal about how you show “*B’tzelem Elohim*” (in the image of God) at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact community. When you are watching the news, is “divine spark” used or shown? How have you enacted the concept in your life? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing “*B’tzelem Elohim*” (in the image of God)?
- Confirm date and time of next “gathering”.
- Participants return to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues at the next gathering.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying *B’tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God) - Divine spark & Otherness - affected their service, their life and home, and their community. Does it change how they viewed the Jewish ways of knowing of *B’tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God), Divine spark & Otherness., and the previously explored ways of knowing - *k’hilah* (Community), *hahnasat orhim* (Hospitality) *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude)?

## Gathering # 6. Topic: Yisra'el (wresting and struggling)

### Goals:

1. To become oriented to additional Jewish ways of knowing
2. To self-identify as a service-learner
3. To self-identify with critical reflective practices
4. To become aware of the power of *Yisra'el* (wresting and struggling)

### Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to name and explain four Jewish ways of knowing
2. Participants will be able to articulate why and how they are service-learners
3. Participants will demonstrate understanding of the differences between introspection, critical reflection and self-critical reflection
4. Participants will broaden their uses of *Yisra'el* (wresting and struggling), *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God) - Divine spark & Otherness, *K'hilah* (Community), *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality), *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude) in actions at home, at gatherings, and at service.

### Process and Content:

#### 1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes).

- Go around circle and ask participants to share previous week's service-projects through the lens of last session's way of knowing - *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God - Divine spark & Otherness), and the previously explored ways of knowing - *k'hilah* (Community), *hahnasat orhim* (Hospitality) *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude)?
- Share journal writings and thoughts.
- Questions for discussions include: What did you notice about your "divine spark and others? How do you show and view yours and other people's spark. Did you think about Buber's "I-thou, and try to interact with others that way. Did you think about Levinas' "responsibility to others without expectation of reciprocity" and did you try it out? How did it feel? Why? Will you use these again? Why or why not? Did you act the same or different than your relationships without family and friends? Why do you think that is?

#### 2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)

- Introduction of the topic of *Yisra'el* (wresting and struggling). Do you know the origin of the world "Yisra'el? Is it a good or bad thing to struggle? To question? To let people know and help you? What do you do when someone else is struggling or questioning?
- **Hevruta and then a group activity.** The assignment: Space ship. You have to leave earth and you will only be allowed to bring one Judaic object for the trip, which will be the Jewish legacy. What object would you choose and why? (A Struggling activity)
- **Text 1: Genesis - Chapter 32: 2-33.** 2. Ya'akov (Jacob) went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 3. When he saw them, Ya'akov said, "This is God's camp." He called the name of that place Mahanayim. 4. Ya'akov sent messengers in front of him to his brother Esav (Esau), to the land of Se'ir, in the country of Edom. 5. He commanded them, saying, "This is what you shall tell my lord, Esav: 'This is what your servant, Ya'akov, says. 6. I have stayed with Lavan (Laban) until now. 6. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, men-servants, and maid-servants. I have sent this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.'" 7. The messengers returned to Ya'akov,

saying, "We came to your brother Esav - he is coming himself to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him." 8. Then Ya`akov was very frightened and in his distressed he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two camps. 9. thinking, "If Esav comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the other camp left will escape." 10. Then Ya`akov said, "God of my father Avraham (Abraham), and God of my father Yitzchak (Isaac), O Lord, who said to me, 'Return to country of your birth, and I will do good by you.' 11. I am not worthy of all the loving kindnesses and truth that you have shown to your servant; for with just my staff I crossed over this Yarden (Jordan); and now I have become two camps. 12. Please deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav: for I fear he may come and strike me down along with the mothers and the children. 13. Yet You said, 'I will surely deal bountifully with you and make your offspring as the sands of the sea, which are too numerous to count. 14. He remained there that night, and selected from all that he had a present for his brother Esav. 15 Two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred sheep and twenty rams. 16. Thirty milk camels and their colts, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty she-donkeys and ten foals. 17. He put these in the charge of his servants, every herd together with its own, and told his servants, "Go ahead and keep a space between herds." 18. He commanded the foremost, saying, "When my brother Esav, meets you, and asks you, 'Whose are you? Where are you going? Whose (animals) are head of you?' 19. Then you shall answer, 'They are your servant, Ya`akov's. It is a present sent to my lord, Esav. And behold, he (Jacob) is right behind us.'" 20. He commanded also the second, and the third, and all that followed the herds, saying, "This is what you shall say to Esav, when you reach him. 21. You shall also say, 'And behold, your servant, Ya`akov, is behind us.'" For, he said, "I will appease him with the presents in advance, and afterwards I will face him and perhaps he will show favor to me." 22. So the present went ahead while he remained that night in the camp. 23. He arose that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaid servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of the Yabbok (Jabbock). 24. He took them across the stream, and sent over all his belongings. 25. Ya`akov was left alone, and wrestled with a man there until the rising of the dawn. 26. When he saw that he did not prevail against him, he reached for the hip socket, and the hollow of Ya`akov's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. 27. The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking" but Ya`akov replied, "I won't let you go, unless you bless me." 28. He said to him, "What is your name?" He replied, "Ya`akov." 28. He said, "Your name will no longer be called 'Ya`akov,' but, 'Yisra'el'(Israel), for you have fought with God (divine beings) and with human beings, and have prevailed." 30. Ya`akov asked, "Please tell me your name." He said, "Why must you ask my name?" and he blessed him there. 31. Ya`akov called the name of that place Peni'el (Penuel), saying "I have seen God (divine beings) face to face, and my life has been preserved." 32. The sun rose upon him as he passed Peni'el, and he limped because of his thigh. 33. Therefore that is why the children of Yisra'el do not eat the sinew of the thigh, at the hip socket, to this day, because he touched (wrenched) Ya`akov's thigh muscle at the hip socket. (My translation)

### 3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)

- **Questions:** What object did you choose and why? How did it feel to struggle between choices? What were your thought processes? Was it easy or difficult? What made it that way? Describe your thought and feeling process. What are your struggles at this time of life? What were your struggles when you were younger and how did you overcome/reconcile them? Would you have answered differently at a different time in your life? How is struggle tied to self-identity?
- **Questions:** What did you think of the story of Ya`akov? Who do you think he was wrestling with? Why do you think his name identity was changed? What is your identity now? How has it changed over your lifetime? Recently? Do you think that change in identity comes only from struggling? Do you think fear and transformation go together? In what ways do you struggle with your identity? Have you been in the presence of

another who was in the process of identity struggle or change? How did it happen? What happened? What did you do? Describe it. What does identity mean to society? Do you think that society accepts people who are struggling with their identities? Why or why not? Why do you think the concept of “wrestling” or struggling is a strong value within the Jewish culture? Do you ever consider “wrestling” in your interactions with Others and in your service-learning? Why or why not?

- How do you think you show your “wrestling” at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of “wrestling” or “struggling” in society or about your enactment of *Yisra’el* (wrestling) towards them?
- Is there a difference between wrestling/ questioning as negative criticism and wrestling/ questioning as critique?

#### **4. Summary of session and homework. (15 minutes)**

- Review the concept of “*Yisra’el* (wresting and struggling).
- Review the biblical text/ story.
- Review homework assignment. Observe and journal about how you show *Yisra’el* (wresting and struggling) at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact *Yisra’el* (wresting and struggling). When you are watching the news, is *Yisra’el* (wresting and struggling) used or shown? How does this parallel with the State of Israel. How have you enacted the concept in your life? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing *Yisra’el* (wresting and struggling)?
- Confirm date and time of next “gathering”.
- Participants return to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues at the next gathering.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying *Yisra’el* (wresting and struggling) affected their service, their life and home, and their community. Does it change how they viewed the Jewish ways of knowing of *B’tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God), Divine spark & Otherness., and the previously explored ways of knowing - *k’hilah* (Community), *hahnasat orhim* (Hospitality) *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude)?

### **Gathering # 7. Topic: *Rahmanut & Gemilut Hasadim* (Compassion & deeds of loving-kindness)**

#### **Goals:**

1. To become oriented to additional Jewish ways of knowing
2. To self-identify as a service-learner
3. To self-identify with critical reflective practices
4. To become aware of the power of *Rahmanut & Gemilut Hasadim* (Compassion & deeds of loving-kindness)

#### **Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name and explain four Jewish ways of knowing
2. Participants will be able to articulate why and how they are service-learners.

3. Participants will demonstrate understanding of the differences between introspection, critical reflection and self-critical reflection
4. Participants will broaden their uses of *Rahmanut* & *Gemilut Hasadim* (Compassion & deeds of loving-kindness), *Yisra'el* (wresting and struggling), *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the image of God) - Divine spark & Otherness, *K'hilah* (Community), *Hahnasat Orhim* (Hospitality), *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *todot* (gratitude) in actions at home, at gatherings, and at service.

### **Content and Process:**

#### **1. Service and sharing service experiences. (15 minutes)**

- Go around circle and ask participants to share previous week's service-projects through the lens of last week's way of knowing – *Yisra'el* (wresting and struggling) Share journal writings and thoughts.
- Questions for discussions include: What did you notice about your wrestling, struggling, or questioning style? How do you show your struggle at your service-project? Is it the same or different than how you show struggling/ wrestling/ questioning to your family and friends? Why do you think that is?

#### **2. Social-action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing theme. (15 minutes)**

- Introduction of the topic of *Rahmanut* & *Gemilut Hasadim* (Compassion & deeds of loving-kindness) Write their ideas on giant post notes on wall from the questions asked. Some questions to ask the participants: What do you think compassion is? Do you think it is the same in English/ America and in Judaism? Why or why not? Do you know the Hebrew word for compassion and loving kindness? How do you know when someone is acting compassionately? With loving kindness? Are compassion and loving kindness the same thing?
- Hevruta and then a group activity. Values clarification Activity. Take all the Jewish Ways of Knowing listed in Chapter III and place them individually on their own pieces of paper. Then place these papers/ ways of knowing/ values in rank order (by self, then Hevruta, then as a group).
- Text. *Birhat HaShahar* (Morning Blessings) prayer (found in the Siddur).
- A few lines:  
 Praised are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who...  
 ...made me free,  
 ...gives sight to the blind,  
 ...clothes the naked,  
 ...releases the bound,  
 ...raises the downtrodden,  
 ...guides us on our path,  
 ...restores vigor to the weary”

#### **3. Discussion and reflection. (15 minutes)**

- Questions: Why did you choose the ranking that you did? Did anyone else's argument convince you to change your mind? Why or why not? What beliefs do you hold that made you choose that order? Did your choices surprise you?
- Questions: When we say the morning prayers do you think we are thanking God, reminding ourselves, or both? What is it about the most vulnerable populations that can



cause one person to be compassionate and another to “harden his heart”? How do older people fit into this equation? Do you think that compassion and loving-kindness are inbred or learned? Why or why not? How has your viewpoint and expression of compassion and loving-kindness changed over your lifetime? What is the difference for you between empathy, compassion, and pity?

#### 4. Summary of session and homework. (15 minutes)

- Review the concept of *Rahmanut & Gemilut Hasadim* (compassion & deeds of loving-kindness)
- Review the activity and text.
- Review homework assignment. Observe and journal about how you show *rahmanut & Gemilut Hasadim* (compassion & deeds of loving-kindness) at your service-project, at home, and out in the community. Record your experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, and what you might want to change about the way you enact compassion and loving kindness?
- When you are watching the news, how are the words compassion and loving kindness used? How have you used these word in your life, how has their meaning changed for you? What will you change or do differently now that you are aware of the Jewish ways of knowing compassion and loving kindness?
- Confirm date and time of next “gathering”.
- Participants return to their service projects while contemplating and incorporating their learning. Then the cycle repeats itself and continues at the next gathering.
- Next session, ask how thinking about and embodying compassion and loving kindness affected their service, their life and home, and their community. Does it change how they viewed the Jewish ways of knowing of *Rahmanut & Gemilut Hasadim* (Compassion & deeds of loving-kindness), B’tzelem Elohim (In the image of God), Divine spark & Otherness., and the previously explored ways of knowing - k’hilah (Community), hahnasat orhim (Hospitality) tzedakah (justice and charity) and todot (gratitude)? ?

### Ideas for Additional Lessons

#### *She’elah Bekortit* (critical questioning),

- Using the Bible story of Avraham questioning God regarding Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Bible text 2. Gen 18:20- 33. 20. Then the LORD said, "The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin very grave. 21. I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as what has reached me. If not, I will know." 22. The men left from there and went toward Sodom, but Avraham (Abraham) remained standing before the Lord. 23. Then Avraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24. What if there are fifty righteous people within the city? Will you sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? 25. Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly?" 26. And the Lord answered, "If I find fifty righteous people within the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 27. Then Avraham spoke up again, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, 28. What if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of the five?" And He answered, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." 29. Once again he spoke to Him, "What if only forty are found there?" He answered, "For the sake of forty, I will not

do it." 30. Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but please let me speak. Perhaps if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." 31. He (Avraham) said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." 32. Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak but once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy for the sake of ten." 33. When the Lord had finished speaking with Avraham, he departed, and Avraham returned to his place. (My translation)

- **Questions:** What did you think about Avraham and questioning God? Have you ever questioned God? What did that feel like? What happened? How do you go about questioning people in authority? What is your questioning style now? How has it changed over your lifetime? Recently? Do you think that questioning is a learned or inbred trait. Why or why not? Do you think people question their circumstances? (Explain the concept of hegemony). Do you think that questioning can lead to change? Do you think that questioning and change always go hand-in-hand? Why or why not? In what ways do you question the way society looks at you – as a Jew, as older person, as male or female, as whatever identity/ identities you possess? Have you been in the presence of another who was in the process of questioning? How did it feel? How did it happen? What happened? What did you do? Describe it. What does questioning mean to society? Do you think that society accepts people who are questioning in general and who are specifically questioning their identities? Why or why not? Why do you think the concept of “questioning” is a strong value within the Jewish culture? Do you ever consider “questioning” in your interactions with Others and in your service-learning? Why or why not? How do you think you show your “questioning” at your service-project? What might your service-recipients or agency members say about the general concept of “questioning” in society or about your enactment of questioning) towards them?

#### ***Simha* (Joy):**

- **Text:** A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken (Proverbs 15:13)

#### ***Shema* (Hearing and Listening):**

- **Text:** Shema Prayer. Read in entirety. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord Alone” (Alt; The Lord is One or the Lord is Unique). -Deuteronomy 6:4.
- **Text:** In the story of Elijah, God was **NOT** found in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire - but found *after* the fire, in “a still small voice.” (1 Kings 19: 11-12).
- **Questions:** What is the difference between hearing and listening? How do you demonstrate both during your service and your reflective processes?

#### ***Tikvah* (Hope):**

- HaTikvah. Sing it together. Then read out loud in English. Discuss. Then sing again.
- HaTikvah anthem English translation: As long as the Jewish spirit yearns deep in the heart, With eyes turned eastward, looking toward Zion, then our hope, The hope of two-thousand-years is not lost: To be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem. (My translation)
- **Questions:** How does one keep hope alive for two thousand years?

#### ***Shabbat* (Rest):**

- **Text:** And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them. And on the seventh day God finished the work that He did, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which

He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work in which creating He had made.(Genesis 2:1-3)

- **Questions:** Why would the Divine have to rest? List reasons. How does it apply to humans? Explain a creative process. Does the creative process have anything to do with liberation? How?

### ***Avodah (Service):***

- History of Bible from animal sacrifice to prayer after destruction of Temple.
- Sing Al sh'loscha devarim. Text: "On Three Things the World Stands: On Torah, on Service and on Loving Deeds" (Pirkei Avot 1:2)
- What does service mean to you? Do you agree with the text? Why or why not?

### **Feminism/ gender discussion**

- *Eishet Havil. A woman of valor*  
A Woman of Valor, who can find? She is more precious than corals.  
Her husband places his trust in her and profits because of her.  
She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.  
She seeks out wool and flax and cheerfully does the work of her hands.  
She is like the trading ships, bringing food from afar.  
She gets up while it is still night to provide food for her household, and a fair share for her staff.  
She considers a field and purchases it, and plants a vineyard with the fruit of her labors.  
She invests herself with strength and makes her arms powerful.  
She senses that her trade is profitable; her light does not go out at night.  
She stretches out her hands to the distaff and her palms hold the spindle.  
She opens her hands to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.  
She has no fear of the snow for her household, for all her household is dressed in fine clothing.  
She makes her own bedspreads; her clothing is of fine linen and luxurious cloth.  
Her husband is known at the gates, where he sits with the elders of the land.  
She makes and sells linens; she supplies the merchants with sashes.  
She is robed in strength and dignity, and she smiles at the future.  
She opens her mouth with wisdom and a lesson of kindness is on her tongue.  
She looks after the conduct of her household and never tastes the bread of laziness.  
Her children rise up and make her happy; her husband praises her:  
"Many women have excelled, but you excel them all!"  
Grace is elusive and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears God -- she shall be praised.  
Give her credit for the fruit of her labors, and let her achievements praise her at the gates.
- **Question:** Would you consider the woman of valor a feminist? Why or why not? Is this description an ideal or a reality? What if we said the same things about a man?

## Summary

In Chapter IV, the idea of an eclectic (Schwab, 1970) *Project* based on interactions between foundational and conceptual elements was presented. It utilized theories and practices of many people across many disciplines and centuries. This *Project* is also based on curricular theories and practices, as outlined above, that were not included in Chapter IV, but were none-the-less factors in creating this unique design that is discursive and sustainable. This *Project* is much more than a progressive, social justice and action-oriented, learning and learner-centered, personal development, experiential and cooperative, and liberatory service-learning education. It is life itself.

In this appendix, the curriculum theories and designs of the *Project* are outlined in greater detail than in the body of this paper. Every year for the past five years, I search for “adult Jewish service-learning” in different Boolean arrangements. There continue to be a very limited number of academic results for mature adult service-learning within and outside of Jewish venues and that is why I am excited that there is now a fully formed and functional *Project*. However, it is a continuing process. Ultimately, our own subjectivities negotiate that space between the known and the unknown. What we are willing to accept, share, and question depends on the cultural network of meaning from which they derive. For this *Project*, that means there was, and continues to be, a high tolerance for the unknown and the ambiguous (Waskow, 1988). Ultimately, grappling with an eclectic approach turned out to be very satisfying and a perfect vehicle for the journey that continues as the *Project*.

## APPENDIX D

### FOUR MONTH POST-GATHERING SURVEY

#### Jewishly-Informed Mature Adult Service-Learning Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Preference for your name in the dissertation: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Demographics:** Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_ Highest level of education: \_\_\_\_\_  
Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_ Where did you spend most of your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
Profession(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Age at retirement: \_\_\_\_\_  
Financial status: (circle) broke, just treading water, comfortable, have more than I could ever use, other: \_\_\_\_\_

**For the next questions, circle your response and make a comment (if you would like). If you need more room, please write on the back of this page, on another piece of paper, or at the bottom of the page.**

1. Were you concerned about "going back to school"? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did you feel the classroom sessions/ gatherings were: too easy, just right, too difficult. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where did you volunteer/ provide service and what were your volunteer activities? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Service-learning is a combination of authentic service, academic learning, and personal reflection. Do you feel that you experienced this combination in this project: Yes, No, Maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the best way for you to reflect on this project? (circle all that apply): Discussion at monthly gatherings, writing in journals, writing on handouts, writing an e-mail, talking with your friends and family, thinking about it on your own, other: \_\_\_\_\_. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you understand the action-oriented tenets of Jewish epistemology (ways of knowing)? yes no, maybe.
7. Circle all the ones you remember: gratitude, tzedakah, wrestling, questioning, compassion, Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), seeing divine spark in all humans, community, responsibility, Mitzvot, Shabbat (rest and reflection), hospitality, liberation, hesed (loving-kindness), hope, memory, joy, humor, listening and hearing.  
Which was your favorite and why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Was the service in this project meaningful to you? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Was the service in this project meaningful to your organization? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Was the service in this project meaningful to your community? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you feel greater commitment to your service/ volunteering? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Was the education/ learning in this project meaningful to you? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Did you enjoy the experiential activities during class? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Were the handouts helpful? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
15. Did you find that the activities, and texts that we studied, tied in with the Jewish concepts presented? yes, no, maybe.  
Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you feel a greater commitment to your learning? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do you feel you are more compassionate towards others since attending this project? yes, no, maybe.  
Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you feel more connected to the community since attending this project? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you feel more personal fulfillment and satisfaction with your volunteering and service since attending this project? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
20. Did you think you grew as a person? yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
21. What did you like best about the project? \_\_\_\_\_
22. What did you like least about the project? \_\_\_\_\_
23. Would you like to continue this project? yes, no, maybe. Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
24. What was the best amount of time to be in these gatherings: 30 minutes, 45 minutes, 1 hour, 1¼ hours, 1½ half hours, other: \_\_\_\_\_. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
25. What day of the week and time of day is best for these gatherings? Sund, Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat. am or pm
26. Do you prefer to meet monthly for these gatherings: yes, no, maybe. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
27. What did you tell your family and friends about the project? \_\_\_\_\_
28. What question would you like to add (and possibly answer) that wasn't included? \_\_\_\_\_
29. Any additional comments or improvements to the project? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

### RESULTS OF FOUR MONTH POST-GATHERING SURVEY

Table 3. Results of Four-Month Post-Gathering Follow-Up Survey (With Comments)

Demographics:	Info	Info	Info	No repl y	Additional Information	
Present age:	59 - 90	Mean age (73.2). Mode age (67.5).	Median age (72)	0	Ages: 59, 67 (x2), 68 (x2), 76, 77, 81, 84, 86, 90	
Marital status:	M (4)	S (2)	W (5)	0	Married (4), single (2), widowed (5). 2 men, 9 women	
Education level:	HS (3) Trade(2)	AA (1) BA (4)	MA=1	0	H.S. grad (3), trade school (2), AA (1), BA (4), MA (1)	
Place of Birth:	US (8)	Outside US (3)			Outside US (3). US States: MD (1), NJ (2), NY (4), PA (1).	
Profession:	Accounting/ bookkeeping/ office (6)	Sales/ retail (2), librarian (1)	pharmac ist (1), social worker (1)	0	Accounting/bookkeeping/ office (6), sales (2), pharmacist (1), librarian (1), social worker (1)	
Age at Retirement:	52.5 to 84; avg = 67.4	9 responses	2 not retired	0	Retired at age: 52.5, 62, 65 (x 2), 66, 70 (x 2), 78, 84. 2 not retired. Average age at retirement = 67.4	
Most time spent during life:					Greensboro (1), Northeast US (7 ), Outside USA (2)	
Financial status:	B (2)	T (3)	C (6)	0	Broke (2), treading water (3), comfortable (6), wealthy (0). (No comments)	
#	<u>Questions:</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>May be</u>	<u>No ans wer</u>	<u>Additional Comments</u>
1	Concerned about going back to school?	2	8	1	0	1) I was interested in types of classes, 2) would love to go back to school, 3) not knowing what to say. (Gail's comment: 8 concerned at IRB) No comment = 8
2	Ease of session (just right = yes)?	11 (just right)	0	0	0	1) Less concentration and memory. No comment= 10
3	Where provide service and activities?	11				(See Chapter V in the "About the Partnering Agencies" section)

4	Experienced Service-learning components?	6	4	1	0	1) Not enough service, 2) All social interaction is a learning experience, 3) Wasn't involved enough in volunteering as I should have been. No comment = 8
5	Best way to reflect?	Discussions (8), thinking on own (7), Writing e-mails (5).	Writing on handouts (3), Talking with friends/family (2).	Journaling (1)	0	1) The fact at my age - interesting but don't absorb as much as I want. Best ways: Discussion (8), Journals (1), writing on handouts (3), writing e-mail (5), talking with friends/family (2), thinking on own (7). No comment = 10
6	Understood action-oriented Jewish ways of knowing & values?	8	1	2	0	1) Some are not just Jewish. No comment= 10
7	Which one(s) remembered?	compassion (9), gratitude (8), tzedakah (7), community (6), Tikkun Olam (6), Mitzvot (6)	Responsibility (5), Shabbat (4), hospitality (4), joy (4), humor (4), listening & hearing (4),	questioning (3), Divine spark (3), memory (2)	0	<b><u>Remembered:</u></b> compassion (9), gratitude (8), tzedakah (7), Tikkun Olam (6), community (6), responsibility (5), Mitzvot (6), hope (5), Shabbat (4), hospitality (4), joy (4), humor (4), listening and hearing (4), questioning (3), hesed (3), seeing divine spark in all humans (3), wrestling (2), memory (2), liberation (2). <b><u>Favorite/ Comment:</u></b> 1) all are my favorites, 2)Tzedakah - know them all but don't remember the specifics, 3) I wrestle with community; these are part of your personality traits, 4) listening to what others have to say, 5) Tikkun Olam, as the world definitely needs healing, 6) hesed, 7) gratitude because of what has been shown to me. No comment = 4
8	Was service in project meaningful to you?	8	2	1	0	1) Not sure it is meaningful to others, 2) of course!, 3) gave me pleasure and satisfaction being with people. No comment = 8
9	Was service for project meaningful to org?	8	1	2	0	1) They thank me, 2) Not associated with any organization. No comment = 9
10	Was service for project meaningful to community?	8	0	3	0	1) Absolutely, 2) enhanced community activity, 3) charity is meaningful, 4) more for the organization [than community]. No comment = 7

11	Greater commitment to service since project?	6	3	2	1	1) Same as before, 2) if everyone gives a little. No comment = 9
12	Was learning in project meaningful to you?	11	0	0	0	1) I enjoy listening to other people, 2) learn a little - moving forward versus stagnant. No comment = 9
13	Did you enjoy the experiential activities?	10	0	1	0	1) with people, hearing others' thoughts and comments - what everyone was contributing. No comments = 10
14	Were the handouts helpful?	8	1	1	1	1) it is helpful to refer back to. No comment = 10
15	Did the activities and texts tie into the Jewish concepts?	10	0	0	1	1) there is so much I don't know that every little bit counts. No comment = 10
16	Greater commitment to learning?	3	3	2	3	1) same, 2) great commitment all my life, 3) every learning is advantageous, 4) always seeking to learn, 5) rethinking my focus. No comment = 6
17	More compassionate toward others?	4	6	1	0	1) Already compassionate - part of me. I can only repair my little bit of the world, 2) Always have been - its a family role model and value, 3) I have more compassion - see people worse than me, 4) already compassionate, 5) Otherness, 6) I have always felt compassionate, 7) I feel I have grown and have greater compassion since volunteering. No comment = 4
18	More connected to community?	3	6	2	1	1) connection is same and strong, 2) as connected, 3) the fact that I am participating makes me feel more part of community. No comment= 8
19	More personal fulfillment and satisfaction?	7	3	1	0	1) Not consciously aware, 2) fulfilling if it helps others, 3) I feel I have given a lot more volunteering than ever before, 4) already committed. No comment = 7
20	Grew as a person?	3	3	4	1	1) not really - I am 81 - I'm there already, 2) every little bit counts, 3) you can always learn, 4) always growing. No comment = 7

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*Note:* Survey questions based on the research questions and questions identified by the participants.



## **APPENDIX F**

### **CORRESPONDENCES AND PERMISSIONS**

#### **Measuring Compassion**

When I sent an e-mail on October 4, 2011 to the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education asking for the best way to measure compassion, I received the following e-mail reply on the same day,

Hi there Gail -

This is the \$65,000 question - in some ways - literally. There is actually not a great, consensus measures of compassion at this time. There are several scales that touch on processes and constructs that related to compassion, such as the Interpersonal Reactivity Index published by Davis years ago. Then, there are a few new scales that touch on compassion such as Kristin Neff's 'self compassion' scale, or Paul Gilbert's 'Fear of compassion' scale, or Lani Shiota's Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale, which includes compassion, or Sprecher and Fehr's Compassionate Love Scale (there are both long and short versions of this one). Again, however, there is not currently a survey out there that assesses the magnitude of an individual's compassion in response to perceived suffering, or an individual's disposition towards/tendency to experience compassion.

The good news is, however, that we are working on this at CCARE right now.

You don't need permission from me/us to use any of the scales that I mention above. They are all accessible online, and all except Kristin Neff's are attached here (you can find hers on her website).. <http://www.self-compassion.org/>

Good luck - it sounds like a really great project!

Emiliana Simon-Thomas, Ph.D.  
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(Emiliana Simon-Thomas, personal e-mail communication, 10/04/2011)

## PERMISSIONS

**From:** Kath Fisher [mailto:kath.fisher@scu.edu.au]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 09, 2012 5:14 PM  
**To:** Gail Bretan  
**Subject:** Re: Your handout on Critical self reflection

hi Gail,

lovely to hear from you and wonderful that you have found the paper useful. I remember the UNCG workshop as one of the top highlights of my trip to the US, a venture that had many!

The citation for the paper is:

Fisher, K. (2012). *Critical reflection: what is it and how do you do it?* Lismore, Australia: Southern Cross University.

all the best  
Kath

[illegible]

Dr Kath Fisher  
Project Leader, Community Based Learning  
Office of Community Engagement  
Southern Cross University  
PO Box 157  
Lismore NSW 2480

0421 315 593

On 09/04/2012, at 12:05 PM, Gail Bretan wrote:

Hi Kath! When you were at UNCG in November, I took your wonderful workshop. Love your handout (used it with my older service-learning adults) and want to reference it (and you) in my dissertation. How would you like it cited? Thanks, G

Gail Bretan  
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*"The secret to happiness is counting your blessings instead of adding up your troubles." Gail*